

445

Additional
Difficult
Bible
Questions
Answered

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**Additional
Difficult
Bible Questions
Answered**

**A Supplementary
Book of Reference
For all
Denominations**

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TO THE READER

WHEN the earlier volume, entitled *555 Difficult Bible Questions Answered*, was published, it met with a reception at once cordial and appreciative, not only from members of the *Christian Herald* family, but among clerical and lay students of the Bible everywhere. So general was the appreciation and so numerous the letters received, testifying to the practical usefulness of the book, that we have been encouraged to follow it with a second volume. We felt all the more justified in doing this, as the field of Biblical research and exposition is one so extensive that the disputed points could not be covered within the compass of a single book. Besides, the material at our disposal, still untouched, related to questions which in interest and importance were no less vital than those already dealt with, and which we felt should be presented in similar form, in order that the work should be so complete as to yield the most satisfactory service.

This task has now been accomplished and we take pleasure in presenting herewith the new volume, *445 Additional Difficult Bible Questions Answered*, which, in conjunction with its predecessor, makes a total of One Thousand Scripture Problems discussed and elucidated, the whole forming a compact repository of information available for reference.

Like the former volume, the present book is the

To the Reader

outcome of Biblical research covering a period of upward of a quarter of a century. It represents the labors of eminent scholars, pastors, professors and theologians of all denominations, who have conducted their investigation along lines of the ablest orthodox exposition. It illuminates and explains a large number of obscure passages, many of which are liable to be misunderstood by the average reader.

We trust that it may be the means of helping many inquiring souls over hard places, and that it will comfort and encourage those who are earnestly striving to learn the truth as it is presented in the Word.

Above all, we hope and pray that it may prove a real aid to practical Christian living, to a better understanding of the Bible and a clearer view of the divine message to man as set forth within its sacred pages.

Difficult Bible Questions

FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

1. What Is One to Do Who, in the Light of Modern Scientific Education, Cannot Harmonize the Bible Stories of the Creation, etc.?

We do not know of any denomination but one which would insist that its members regard as inspired every paragraph of our present version of the Bible. For instance, one or two passages of the Authorized Version are omitted in the American Revision and one or two more are indicated as having been omitted from the earliest manuscripts. Under such circumstances it would hardly be fair for any church (except the Catholic) to excommunicate a person who found it difficult to accept one or two more paragraphs of the present version. The new emphasis in regard to the Bible is that it is not a text-book of science, or geography, or history—but of salvation. It shows how God has dealt with the souls of men in the past and promises that he will do even greater things for those who will trust him now. It gets us acquainted with Christ as Saviour and Friend and shows how we may live in his companionship and service. But again, we must not be too sure of our own scientific knowl-

edge. Science is constantly being compelled to shift its position. The most scholarly attitude is that of the greatest humility. It is never necessary to violate one's "better judgment," but it is necessary, in order to find salvation, to be humble and reverent and to be willing to receive into one's soul the light and truth of the Holy Spirit.

2. What Are the Objections of Jews and Catholics to Having the Bible Read in the Public Schools?

The Jews, so far as we know, would be willing to have the Old Testament read in the public schools and also some of the ethical passages of the New Testament. It would be difficult to win the consent of Catholics to more than the purely ethical and perhaps the historical passages. The Jews, of course, object to the Bible as it is because it recognizes Christ as the Messiah and teaches the doctrine of the Trinity, whereas they are strict Unitarians. The Catholics object to its use in the public schools because they hold that the church, as represented by its priests, must interpret the doctrines of the Scriptures. They object, of course, to the use of the King James and Revised Versions because they were prepared under Protestant auspices. The Catholic Church uses the Douay Version, which differs in a number of details from the Protestant. Catholic doctrine makes the church's interpretation of the Scriptures of as great value as the Scriptures themselves, hence that church has not, we believe, definitely encouraged the private reading of the Bible, unaccompanied as that must be

by priestly interpretation. There is noticeable, however, a marked change in Catholic opinion on this point, for Catholic periodicals now carry advertisements offering Bibles for sale, while authorized selections of Scripture passages are also recommended for private and family use.

3. How Many Different Kinds of Laughter Are Mentioned in the Bible?

1. Laughter of incredulity (Gen. 18:12). 2. Laughter of joyful wonder (Gen. 17:17). 3. Laughter of defiance or conscious security (Job 5:22). 4. Laughter (or, in modern parlance, smile) of approbation (Job 29:24). 5. Hollow laughter, with undertone of sorrow (Prov. 14:13). 6. Laughter of derision or scorn, applied by strong anthropomorphism to God (Ps. 2:4). 7. Laughter of rapturous delight (Ps. 126:2).

4. What Have Brainy Men Not Known as Active Christians Said About the Bible and Its Teachings?

Many men have paid unfaltering tribute to the Scriptures. Thus Benjamin Franklin said: "Young man, my advice to you is to cultivate an acquaintance with and firm belief in the Holy Scripture, for this is your certain interest. I think Christ's system of morals and religion as he left them with us the best the world ever saw or is likely to see." Professor Huxley wrote: "I have always been strongly in favor of secular education without theology, but I

must confess that I have been no less seriously perplexed to know by what practical measures the religious feeling which is the essential basis of moral conduct is to be kept up in the present utterly chaotic state of opinion on these matters without the use of the Bible." Even Goethe must say as follows: "It is a belief in the Bible which has served me as the guide of my moral and literary life. No criticism will be able to perplex the confidence which we have entertained of a writing whose contents have stirred up and given life to our vital energy by its own. The farther the ages advance in civilization the more will the Bible be used." And the great Napoleon pays this tribute: "The Bible contains a complete series of acts and of historical rule to explain time and eternity, such as no other religion has to offer. If it is not the true religion, one is very excusable in being deceived, for everything in it is grand and worthy of God. The more I consider the Gospel, the more I am assured that there is nothing there which is not beyond the march of events and above the human mind. Even the impious themselves have never dared to deny the sublimity of the Gospel, which inspires them with a sort of compulsory veneration. What happiness that Book procures for those who believe it." Diderot says: "No better lessons can I teach my child than those of the Bible," and Matthew Arnold: "To the Bible men will return because they cannot do without it. The true God is and must be pre-eminently the God of the Bible, the eternal who makes for righteousness, from whom Jesus came forth and whose Spirit governs the course of humanity."

5. What Do the Scriptures Tell Us About Animals?

Beasts of all kinds were created by God and they exhibit God's power even as they are made for the praise and glory of God (Gen. 1:24, 25; Gen. 2:19; Jer. 27:5; Ps. 148:10). He gave them the herbs of the field for food and as power over them was given to man they instinctively fear him. Adam gave them their names, but they remain the property of God and the subjects of his care (Gen. 1:30; Gen. 1:26, 28; Gen. 9:3; Gen. 2:19, 20; Ps. 50:10; Ps. 36:6). They are described as devoid of speech, understanding and immortality, but possessed of instinct, and though wild by nature, capable of being tamed (II Pet. 2:16; Ps. 32:9; Ps. 49:12-15; Isa. 1:3; Ps. 50:11). They are found in deserts, fields, mountains and forests and inhabit dens, caves and deserted cities (Isa. 13:21; Deu. 7:22; So. of Sol. 4:8; Isa. 56:9; Job 37:8; Isa. 13:21, 22). They were divided into clean and unclean and to this day the distinction is observed. The clean beasts were ox, wild ox, sheep, goat, hart, roebuck, wild goat, fallow deer, chamois (Ex. 21:28; Deu. 7:13; Deu. 14:4, 5), while among the unclean were counted the camel, dromedary, horse, ass, mule, lion, leopard, bear, wolf, unicorn, ape, fox, dog, swine, hare, mouse, mole, weasel, ferret and badger (Gen. 24:64; I Kings 4:28; Gen. 22:3; II Sam. 13:29; Judg. 14:5, 6; So. of Sol. 4:8; II Sam. 17:8; Gen. 49:27; Num. 23:22; I Kings 10:22; Ps. 63:10; Ex. 22:31; Lev. 11:7; 6:5, 29, 30; Ex. 25:5. The domestic animals are to enjoy the Sabbath, are to be taken care of and not to be cruelly used (Ex. 20:10; Lev. 25:7; Num. 22:27-32).

6. What Do We Learn in the Bible About Birds?

Birds were created by God for his glory (Gen. 1:20, 21; Ps. 148:10). The power over them given to man and they instinctively fear him; man may learn lessons of wisdom from them (Gen. 1:26; Gen. 9:2; Job 12:7). They are called fowls of the air, fowls of heaven, feathered fowl, winged fowl, birds of the air (Gen. 7:37; Job 35:11; Ezek. 39:17; Deu. 4:17; Matt. 8:20). Many kinds are granivorous, many carnivorous; they all have claws and are propagated by eggs (Matt. 13:4; Gen. 15:11; Gen. 40:19; Dan. 4:33; Jer. 17:11). They have each their peculiar note or song, are migratory and inhabit mountains, deserts, marshes, deserted cities, trees, clefts of rocks and dwell under the roofs of houses (Ps. 104:12; Eccles. 12:4; Jer. 8:7; Ps. 50:11; Isa. 14:23; Isa. 34:11, 14, 15; Ps. 104:17; Num. 24:21; Isa. 34:15; Ps. 84:3). They were divided into clean and unclean. Among the clean were reckoned the dove, pigeon, quail, sparrow, swallow, cock and hen, partridge, crane (Gen. 8:8; Lev. 14:22; Lev. 1:14; Ex. 16:12; Lev. 14:4; Ps. 84:3; Matt. 23:27; I Sam. 26:20; Isa. 38:14), and among the unclean the eagle, vulture, glede, raven, owl, cuckoo, hawk, owl, swan, pelican, stork, heron, bat, ostrich, peacock (Lev. 11:13; Lev. 11:14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19; Job 39:13; I Kings 10:22).

7. How Are We to Strengthen Our Belief in the Scriptures?

The first step is to stop all anxious worry about this matter. God is going to take care of you. Christ is

a very kind physician, and his first treatment for one who is all worn out and weary with fruitless mental effort is rest. "Come unto me, and I will give you rest," he is urging. He would say to you, as he said once to his disciples: "Come ye yourselves into a desert place, and rest a while." The mental effort you have been making is in the wrong direction. One does not find the Christian life as one masters the multiplication table, by mental effort and application. It is as if you were longing to hear a beautiful piece of music; and instead of going to hear the music when you were near the place in which it was being rendered, you should spend your time and strength studying the scientific meaning and methods of melody, harmony, etc. To delve into these studies does not make you hear music. You must go where the music is being made and *listen* to it. While you are listening you will not be puzzling your own brain, or trying to understand anything. It is in some such way that the soul finds and touches Christ—by ceasing to struggle, by ceasing to figure things out, by yielding the soul to him in complete abandonment. You will be greatly helped by going among the most intensely spiritual people you know. You may shrink from this. You may find their ways and their sayings distasteful, because your heart has not yet been put into tune. But go to their meetings; give yourself up to the atmosphere of them; be reasonable enough to admit that God would like to do for you what he has done for them, to bless you as he has blessed them. We can get help reading our Bibles alone, but we get added help in understanding the Bible and in getting acquainted with Christ by associating with spiritually minded people. Above all, be-

gin and begin now, to trust Christ himself. Test him. Accept the fact of his divinity and his power to forgive and cleanse you and become your friend as a mathematician or logician accepts a "hypothesis." Take it for granted it is true, and as you take it for granted you will begin to find the evidence in your own heart and mind that it is true indeed. Then begin at once to help others. Forget yourself in helping them, and the light of Christ will keep growing brighter and brighter in your life.

8. Can a Person Be a Christian and Not Study the Bible?

The Christian should go to the Bible just as a sheep goes to pasture or a thirsty man to water. We should cultivate the feeling that in the Bible God is speaking to us personally, and read it for ourselves, expecting to find definite, personal messages for our own souls. Hearing others talk about the Bible or explain it or preach from its texts can never take the place of reading it for ourselves. But we ought ever to be mindful of the fact that preaching and teaching are the most important functions of ministers and preachers. They are highly trained, are specially endowed to that end, and their explanations of texts and passages, being the result of careful and prayerful preparation and research, have the weight of authority and should be accordingly valued. Helps and commentaries are also useful, but we should not get into the habit of relying upon them or of reading them to the exclusion of the Bible itself. Many people, particularly young Christians, are apt to become discouraged about their Bible

reading because they begin with the most difficult instead of the simplest parts. A good book to begin with is the Gospel of Mark. This is a straightforward account of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus. After reading this several times you will become interested in reading Matthew's and Luke's accounts of the same events, and will read John to get the deeper and more spiritual conceptions of the Master and his wonderful conversations reported at greater length here than in the other Gospels. At the same time be reading the book of Acts, which is plain and intensely interesting. Read Isaiah and the Psalms for devotional use. In Paul's epistles a good place to start is the letter to the Philippians, which is full of joy and contains plain and important teachings about the person of Jesus. Ephesians and Colossians contain rich spiritual teaching, and Romans and Galatians give the foundations of Paul's doctrine. Starting with this foundation you will be better able to understand and enjoy all the other epistles of the New Testament. Gradually you will grow familiar with the Old Testament, history and prophecy alike, and will soon come to find Bible reading a delight, particularly if you have passed through a definite experience of conversion through faith in Christ's blood and are seeking all the time to come, through faith and obedience, into closer fellowship with him.

9. Is Its Antiquity the Best Reason We Have for Believing the Scriptures?

Some ancient writings, like the Vedas, for instance, are almost as ancient as the Bible. And many tablets

and monuments are in existence containing words written as long ago as the writings of the Scriptures. There are many powerful arguments for the Bible, but the greatest is that every person who will really study it finds that it does tell the truth about the human soul. When a man reads in an arithmetic that two and two make four he does not stop to ask himself why he should believe the arithmetic. He knows instinctively and intuitively that the arithmetic is telling him the truth. So when an honest man studies the Bible he finds it full of truths about himself. The Bible tells him he is a sinner; and he knows that is true. The Bible tells him about God, and he finds in his heart a deep conviction that just such a God exists. The Bible offers forgiveness and the man knows he needs it. Step by step and point by point, the Bible shows the man what he is and what he needs and points the way to finding the fulfilment of his needs and desires. People find in the Bible help for bearing their trials, power to resist temptation, assurance of immortality and friendship with God. A man who never saw the Bible before, when he reads of God in it, realizes that he always needed and longed for God but did not know how to find him till the Bible showed him the way. Particularly does it show him how to find God in Christ. That, after all, is the supreme mission of the Bible—to lead men to Christ.

But again, taking the Bible as literature, we find that it hangs together, that it bears within itself the evidence that it is true. Start with the writings of Paul. Here is a level-headed, highly educated, practical man who has left to the world's literature certain letters to groups of friends. These letters tell about Paul's

personal knowledge of Christ, his personal friendship for him, his personal endeavors to forward the work of Christ which he had formerly antagonized until Christ himself appeared to him and set him right. Paul tells of becoming acquainted later with men who had known Christ in the flesh—Peter, James, John and others. We find that these men also wrote about Jesus; John writing three letters and a narrative of his life, Peter writing two letters, and apparently giving much of the information to his nephew Mark, who wrote another version of the life of Jesus. Luke, another friend of Paul and probably also a personal friend of Jesus, wrote another version of his life and wrote the history of what the apostles did through his power after he had risen from the dead and gone back to the heavenly world. These were all good, honest, intelligent men. We may believe what they wrote about Christ and his salvation, just as we believe what Cæsar wrote about the Gallic wars. Further, we find that Christ came from a people whose history is recorded in the books of the Bible and whose prophets uttered messages from God, many of them foretelling the coming of Christ. Peter connects the messages of the prophets with those of himself and the other apostles in II Peter 3:2: "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." The Bible holds together about the person of Christ the great divine-human document which reveals him to the world.

10-11 Difficult Bible Questions

10. Is the Bible Grammatical?

In the authorized version, prepared in the reign of King James (seventeenth century), many of the forms and phrases used by the earlier translators were retained, and these have not all disappeared even at the present time. The relative pronoun is frequently used in the A. V. instead of the personal, the word "let" for "prevent," "mine" for "my," "an" for "a" (before the aspirate), "bewray" for "betray," etc. Amid the changes which every language undergoes these ancient forms (now obsolete) seem out of place; but the veneration in which the Bible is held has been the means of preserving them. At the time they were first employed they were not only thoroughly grammatical but elegant in a literary sense, and even today they cannot be regarded as a violation of grammar. The Revised Version has substituted modern phraseology for very many of the old forms employed in the King James Bible.

11. What Are the More Prominent New Testament Manuscripts?

1. The Codex Sinaiticus now in St. Petersburg, or Petrograd. It contains the whole New Testament, and was discovered by Tischendorf in 1859 in the monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai. It was written not later than the fourth century.

2. The Codex Alexandrinus, now in the British Museum, was written in the fifth century and contains the whole Bible.

3. The Codex Vaticanus, known as Vatican M.S. No. 1209, and now in the Vatican library. It was

written in the latter part of the fourth century and contains the whole Bible with some exceptions.

4. The Codex Ephræmii Rescriptus, so called because part of the original writing had been erased in order to use the parchment to write some of the work of Euphræm, a Syrian father, thereon.

5. The Peshito Syriac version, considered by some scholars as spurious.

12. Can the Bible Be Classed Among Good Literature?

The Bible is all good literature. It stands high in the narrative, the didactic, the oratoric, the allegoric, the lyric, the dramatic and the epic. Much of it is poetry of the highest order; much is praise sublime in character and expression; a good deal of it is philosophy of a kind that appeals to the minds of all the ages; it is replete with tragedy, in both the Old Testament and the New. To classify all the finer passages from a literary standpoint would be a large task, and one to be undertaken only by able and reverent scholarship. It would have to be gone over by literary experts, book by book, chapter by chapter, verse by verse.

13. What Became of the Book of Nathan the Prophet, and of God the Seer Mentioned in I Chron. 29:29?

They are lost. That is to say, if they are in existence anywhere no one knows where they are. The titles of nineteen books are mentioned in the Bible which are missing, such as the Book of the Wars of the Lord mentioned Num. 21:14 and the Book of the Acts of Solomon mentioned I Kings 11:41. There is

14-15 Difficult Bible Questions

no doubt that the historical books of the Bible as we now have them were compiled from older books or documents which were not preserved.

14. Who Are the "Unnamed Persons" in the Bible?

Among the unnamed persons in the Bible, so far as any clue to their identity can be found from legendary or traditionary sources, were these: Jannes and Jambres, the magicians who withstood Moses in Pharaoh's court; Veronica, the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment; Ben Ezra, the son of Marianne (sister of Philip the disciple), the lad who held the basket of loaves and fishes; Longinus, the soldier who pierced the Saviour's side, and Dismas and Gestas, the crucified thieves (to the former of whom the promise of Paradise was given). Nearly all of these names are to be found in the apocryphal "Gospel of Nicodemus."

15. Who First Collected the Scriptures of the Old Testament?

Popular belief as well as tradition credits Ezra and his learned associates of the "great synagogue" with the task of collecting the Scriptures of the Jewish Church. It is generally held that the foundation of the present Hebrew canon is due to him. The work of assembling the writings which made up "The Book of the Lord" must have begun before Isaiah's time, since he mentions it as a general collection (Isa. 34: 16), to which his own were to be added. It is not clear that there was any definite collection either of psalms or the prophets before the Captivity. Daniel, however, refers to "the books" (Dan. 9: 2), which in

his day had apparently been collected as a whole. It is considered quite probable that Nehemiah had a share in gathering the books. Ezra lived about 460 B. C. All that is known of him through Scripture is contained in the last four chapters of the book of Ezra and in Neh. 8 and 12:26.

16. Is Not the Bible in Part Obsolete?

Not so. It has in every part of it its lessons even to the present day, though of course not all its merely local laws are binding on all men. So, for instance, while God does not now ask us to offer sheep and bullock and other material sacrifices, yet those requirements have their deep lessons for us. The sin offering, the trespass offering, the burnt offering, the peace offering teach deep lessons of how much is necessary to atone for sin and how great was the work of Jesus in doing penance once and for all for all sin. The deluge has no warning at the present time, but who can doubt the lesson it taught and who would be without the rainbow which followed it? The Ten Commandments, who would do away with them, even though Christ has fulfilled all law? Are they not ever the never-failing reminder of what is required of us and the ever-reflecting mirror in which to view our misdeeds and shortcomings?

17. Was the Art of Printing Known in Biblical Times?

Not in the sense in which we understand it. Printing is first mentioned in the Bible in the book of Job, chap. 19:23, where he says "O! That my words were now written! O! That they were printed in a book!"

Although this has been taken by some as indicating the existence of the printer's art in the earliest times, the obvious fact is that Job intended to refer to manuscript or writing on papyrus rolls and that the translator gave the passage a modern aspect which is misleading. Engraving on stone and wood and metal was done in very ancient times, but the honor of discovering the "art preservative" as we now interpret it seems to belong to China, where printing long antedated Guttenberg's discovery.

18. Is It Right to Secularize the Scriptures or Any Part of Them by Putting Their Characters or the Person of Our Lord into an Imaginary Story Environment?

The prejudice against such form of literature as *Ben Hur*, *The Prince of the House of David*, etc., is a mistaken one. You would rob literature cruelly if you took out all the resettings of Scripture narratives and teaching, and all the beautiful stories, poems, parables and idyls that have grown up about the person of Christ. The works of the great poets, like Dante, Milton, Tennyson, Browning, are full of Scripture allusions, the retelling of Scripture incidents and the restatement of Scriptural lessons. The incalculable amount of good done by such parables as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Holy War*, in which the person of Christ becomes a character of the story, proves that their writing was justified. The very books *Ben Hur* and *The Prince of the House of David* have done untold good, serving to make the person of Christ and the facts of the spiritual life more real. Of course all within limits. We do not approve of many of the

modern dramas and photoplays where the person of Christ is brought in, but in books like those you mention only good can be done by treating of Christ in a "familiar" way. Many of us are oftentimes unmindful of the fact that the "Word was made flesh" with all that that implies to us; became as we are, had our body, our physical and psychic functions and ills (all, however, minus sin and its consequences), and thus was one of us, our Brother, whose very likeness makes him near and dear, as indeed he wants to be. Many traits of his character, many peculiarities are not mentioned in the Scriptures; much that he said and did is not there recorded. Why, then, not idealize, so long as we stay within bounds of due reverence and truthful likelihood? "Lo, I am with you alway" (Matt. 28:20). Glorious words! If he is with us always, and everywhere, why not picture him as with those who figure in *Ben Hur*, etc.?

19. Is the Bible Opposed to Woman Suffrage?

The language of I Tim. 2:11-15 and I Cor. 14:34, 35 is frequently quoted by the opponents of woman suffrage. The attitude of the church in Pauline times was clear and emphatic. The apostle evidently was of the opinion that there were callings for which a woman was unfitted by nature, that she had a well-defined sphere which she could fill with grace and satisfaction. We cannot reconcile this view with present-day ideas. It may be, however, that there was a necessity for such teaching at that time, especially in Corinth, where a certain class of women (non-Christians) was very much in evidence. Paul naturally desired that Christian women should be in marked

contrast with the conduct of the pagan women. In this view his rules might have an application more local than general. Paul stands practically alone, among the early writers, in the rigidity of his attitude toward women. He believed in wifely obedience and modesty in behavior and apparel, and he did not wish to see the women of the Christian Church emulate the brazen conduct of a certain class of Greek women. At the time when Paul wrote, the morals of Corinth and Ephesus were of such a character (with loose living and false teaching) that he deemed it advisable to urge the Christian women to a quieter and more seemly mode of living than their heathen contemporaries. His epistles were suited to the time and place and conditions. Paul's suggestion in I Tim. 5:11 was with relation to the choice of suitable women for membership on the presbytery rolls. He drew the line at light-headed, worldly minded persons whose fondness for pleasure and society was pronounced and who were more likely to seek marriage again than to devote themselves wholly to the service of the church. Second marriages he regarded with disfavor. Moreover, widowed presbyteresses, when taking their vows, engaged to remain single because the interests of the church made this desirable.

20. What Do the Scriptures Say About Themselves?

They are given by inspiration of God and the Holy Ghost (II Tim. 3:16; Acts 1:16; Heb. 3:7; II Pet. 1:21). Christ sanctioned them by teaching out of and appealing to them (Matt. 4:4; Mark 12:10; John 7:43; Luke 24:27). They are called

"The Word," "The Word of God," "The Word of Christ," "The Word of Truth," "Holy Scripture," "Scripture of Truth," "The Book," "The Book of the Lord," "The Book of the Law," "The Sword of the Spirit," "Oracles of God" (James 1: 21-23; Luke 11:28; Col. 3:16; James 1:18; Rom. 1:2; Dan. 10:21; Ps. 40:7; Isa. 34:6; Neh. 8:3; Ps. 1:2; Eph. 6:17; Rom. 3:2).

They contain the promises of the Gospel, reveal the laws, statutes and judgments of God, record divine prophecies and testify of Christ (Rom. 1:2; Deu. 4:5, 14; II Pet. 1:19, 21; John 5:39; Acts 10:43; Acts 18:28; I Cor. 15:3).

They are full and sufficient, an unerring guide and able to make wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (Luke 16:29, 31; Prov. 6:23; II Tim. 3:15). They are pure, true, perfect, precious, quick and powerful (Ps. 12:6; Ps. 119:160; Ps. 19:7; Ps. 19:10; Heb. 4:12), and are designed for regenerating, quickening, illuminating, converting the soul and sanctifying (James 1:18; Ps. 119:50, 93; Ps. 119:130; Ps. 19:7; John 17:17; Eph. 5:26). They produce faith, hope and obedience, cleanse the heart, convert the soul, make wise the simple (John 20:31; Ps. 119:49; Rom. 15:4; Deu. 17:19, 20; John 15:3). They should be the standard of teaching, believed, appealed to, read and known; they should be read publicly to all, received as the Word of God with meekness, laid up in the heart and obeyed (I Pet. 4:11; John. 2:22; I Cor. 1:31; Deu. 17:19; II Tim. 3:15; I Thess. 2:13; James 1:21; Deu. 6:6); while all should desire to hear them, they should be not only heard but obeyed and be used against our spiritual enemies (Neh. 8:1;

Matt. 7:24; Matt. 4:4, 7). Saints love them exceedingly, delight in, long after, stand in awe of and esteem them highly (Ps. 119:97; Ps. 1:2; Job 23:12; Ps. 119:82; Ps. 119:161). Therefore they hide them in their heart, hope in them, meditate, rejoice, trust in and obey them (Ps. 119:11; Ps. 119:74; Ps. 119:162, 42, 67), also speak of them and praying to be conformed to, plead their promises in prayer (Ps. 119:172; Ps. 119:133, 25, 28, 41, 76, 169).

OLD TESTAMENT SUBJECTS

21. Is There Any Truth in the Assertion That in Abraham Offering Up His Son He Was But Following the Example of His Idolatrous Neighbors Who Offered Up Their Children in Sacrifice to Moloch?

The record in Genesis, 22d chapter, is clear and unmistakable. It was a test of Abraham's faith in God. It is probable that human sacrifices already existed among the heathen, but Isaac was a "child of promise," and therefore doubly dear to his parents, and there is no warrant in Scripture for inferring that Abraham, of his own free will, made the deliberate choice to offer him up. Indeed, verse 2 dismisses such a supposition altogether.

22. Was the Covenant with Abraham Intended as a Continuing Covenant?

The covenant with Abraham was, in a spiritual sense, to be an everlasting covenant. It applies to the church in all ages (to "Abraham and his seed," Gal. 3:29). Circumcision was a sign and symbol of spiritual blessing. The covenant, however, applied only to those who lived up to its requirements. In the Christian Church baptism conveys the same significance.

23. What Are the Leading Dates from the Call of Abraham to the Birth of Christ?

Students who try to construct a chronology exclusively from the Bible records are practically in accord on the date of the beginning of the reign of Saul, the first King of Israel, as being 1093 or 1095 years before the Christian era. Counting backward from that date the question arises how long the country was ruled by the Judges. If the Judges mentioned were successive the period between the death of Joshua and the accession of Saul was about 500 years. But if some of those Judges governed contemporaneously the period may not have been more than 334 years. So that some students place the death of Joshua at 1593 B. C., and others at 1427 B. C. Others again, taking Paul's statement (Acts 13:20), make the date 1543 B. C. The results, according to the long reckoning, are as follows: Call of Abraham, 2164 B. C.; migration of Jacob to Egypt, 1874; birth of Moses, 1738; the exodus, 1658, and the death of Joshua, 1593. Deduct 166 from each of these dates, and you have the dates assigned by students who believe that the "times of the Judges" was not more than 334 years. The later dates are: Accession of Solomon, 1013; dedication of the temple, 1003; revolt of the ten tribes, 973; fall of northern kingdom, 722; capture of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar, 587; decree of Cyrus for the return of the Jews, 537; completion of the second temple, 517; Antiochus subjugates Palestine, 218; Antiochus Epiphanes profanes the temple, 170; Jerusalem taken by Pompey, 63.

24. Can the Incident of Abraham's Prevarication Be Explained? (Gen. 12: 11-13.)

We must not think that all that the Bible records of the doings of good men must all be good. Abraham was only human, after all, and had human failings. Scripture, being truthful, records the bad in a man with the good. Abraham did not succeed in being always faithful. He did not trust God to the extent that he could preserve both himself and Sarah from the perils to be met among the Egyptians. So he hit upon a scheme of passing off his wife as his sister, thereby endeavoring to run the lesser risk of having her merely confined for a time in a harem. His desire seems to have been intended merely to gain time during which he might take measures for securing her return to him. The *Speaker's Commentary* draws this conclusion: "We see in the conduct of Abraham an instance of one under the influence of deep religious feeling and true faith in God but yet with a conscience imperfectly enlightened as to many moral duties, and when leaning to his own understanding suffered to fall into great error and sin. In this practical difficulty Abraham's faith failed. He fell back upon devices and lost his trust. The man who is consciously in divine hands need not plan and plot, need not devise and equivocate, he may simply follow the divine lead with assurance of perfect safety."

25. Was Adam Created Before Eve?

Some scientists have contended that the first human pair appeared simultaneously and that if there could have been priority it would have been with the female.

The account in Genesis 2:22 most certainly implies that man was created before woman. The apostle Paul evidently believed that it was so (see I Tim. 2:13). The other account of the Creation (Gen. 1:27) indicates a simultaneous creation. Whether we are to accept the account in Genesis 2:22 as a fuller and more detailed narrative, or whether we must regard it as an attempt to prove the close and intimate relation of husband and wife, is not clear.

26. If the Physical Man in Adam Did the Eating of the Forbidden Fruit, Why Should His Soul Have Suffered?

While it is true that there is a soul in man which is a distinct entity, you cannot separate the responsibility for sin, apportioning some sins to the soul and some to the body. There is no need to argue about Adam, when our own experience is so much more pertinent, and in this Adam was only a type of ourselves. Luther used to tell the story of a bishop who was also an archduke. One day he uttered an oath, and when some one looked astonished he asked why the man stared. "To hear a bishop swear," was the reply. "I swear," said the bishop, "as a prince, not as a bishop." To which the other replied: "When the prince goes to perdition, what will become of the bishop?" The soul is a consenting party to the sins of the body. It is defiled and degraded by bodily sin, and is justly punished for not maintaining order. The soul should be supreme, and when the body, which is allied to the animal world, craves indulgence in forbidden things, the soul ought to restrain it. If it does

not, it has abdicated its functions and deserves punishment. God gave man a soul that he might rise out of his brutal origin, and gave it power over the body and stands ready to give it more power if more is needed.

27. Who Was the Mother of Asa?

In I Kings 15:2-10 there seems to be a contradiction as to the relation of Maachah to Asa. Was she his mother or his grandmother? She appears to have been his grandmother. Her name is mentioned probably to show Asa's title to the throne. Rehoboam, his grandfather, enacted that of all his children only those of whom Maachah was the mother should be in line of succession to the throne. She is spoken of loosely as his mother just as in the next verse to the one quoted (I Kings 15:11) David is described as his father, though he was really Asa's great-great-grandfather. Nor was Maachah the daughter of Absalom, but his granddaughter.

28. When Was the Ark of the Covenant Last Heard Of?

No reference is made to the Ark after that of II Chron. 35:3, when Josiah ordered it to be restored to the Temple. It may have been carried away by Nebuchadnezzar with the other sacred articles when he plundered the Temple. No reference being made to the Ark by Ezra, Nehemiah or Josephus subsequent to the Captivity, it is believed that there was no Ark in the second Temple and that the Holy of Holies was empty. The Jews, however, have a tradition that before Nebuchadnezzar plundered the Temple the

priests hid the Ark and that its hiding-place will be revealed by the Messiah at his coming. His knowledge of it will, they declare, be a proof of his claims. No specific search is being made for the Ark, but the Exploration Society would be little likely to neglect a clue to its hiding-place, if one could be furnished.

29. How Was It Possible for a Work of the Large Dimensions of the Tower of Babel to Be Erected in the Time and by the Few People Who Lived Directly After the Flood?

It is clear, from the Biblical account, that in the considerable period which must have elapsed between the Flood and the confusion the race had multiplied rapidly and spread out over the land (see Gen. 10). Josephus, the Jewish historian (in *Antiquities*, Book 1, chap. 4), says that they were "a multitude" when they followed Nimrod's advice to build the tower. He adds "by reason of the multitude of hands employed on it, it grew very high sooner than any one could expect." All the evidence points to the conclusion that the period intervening was much greater than is indicated in Ussher's chronological notes found in the margin of the Bible. Those calculations are not in any sense a portion of the text itself, but were made about the year 1650.

30. Who Was Balaam?

Balaam, first mentioned in Num. 22:5, belonged to the Midianites. Pethor, where he dwelt, was in Mesopotamia, a considerable distance from Moab. He

himself speaks of "being brought from Aram out of the mountains of the east" (Num. 23:7). Josephus, the historian, calls him "a diviner" (soothsayer), a man of great skill in prediction and magic. Balak's language to him in Num. 22:6 was meant to flatter him and make him compliant with his will. It is evident, however, that Balaam had knowledge of the one true God. One commentator writes: "He was possessed of high gifts and had the intuition of truth—in short, he was a poet and a prophet. He himself confessed that he derived his gifts from God. But he, elated with his success, had become proud and believed the gifts were his own and could be used for his own purposes, to make merchandise and acquire riches and honors. But when he received the message of the elders of Moab and Midian, and was tempted to seize the great opportunity to his own advantage, he was divinely warned that his actions would be overruled. As the Bible story shows, God did interfere and the genius of the self-willed, stubborn prophet, under divine influence, became the instrument through which came a message of great power and beauty, bearing upon the destiny of the Jewish nation, and which is cherished by the church throughout the world.

31. Was the Prophecy Regarding Babylon's Fate Fulfilled?

The prophecy in Isa. 13 regarding Babylon has been literally fulfilled. It is a heap of ruins; it has never been rebuilt and is uninhabited, save by wild beasts. Its extensive ruins are traced on the east bank of the Euphrates River. The region, once fertile, has become a sterile waste, largely marsh. Explorers have made

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many excavations, but no one, we believe, has ever suggested the *rebuilding* of Babylon.

32. Why Was the Beetle Worshiped by the Egyptians as an Emblem of Eternity and Resurrection?

The scarabæus was worshiped because of its supposed mystical virtues. The number of its toes (30) represented the days of the month; its time of depositing eggs had reference to the lunar month, and another of its peculiarities had reference to the action of the sun on the earth. As it was of one sex (as supposed) it represented the eternal, self-existent, self-begotten principle of deity, and there were still other parallels which the Egyptians discovered to connect the sacred beetle with their gods. During its life it was worshiped, and after death embalmed.

33. Where Did the Colored Race Originate?

Noah and his family being all that were saved from the Flood (Gen. 6:17), the colored race must have originated in this family. Noah had a son named Ham. The name *Ham* signifies *swarthy* or *sunburnt* and Noah's youngest son was undoubtedly so named prophetically as the progenitor of the sunburnt Egyptians and Cushites and all the dark-skinned servile races who are to-day designated sons of Ham. Ham was married when the Deluge occurred and with his wife and four sons, Cush, Mizraim, Phut and Canaan, was saved from general destruction. It is a notable fact that Noah did not curse Ham for his offense (see Gen. 9:25), but he cursed Canaan the youngest

son of Ham, and prayed that he might be the slave of Shem and Japhet and their descendants. The punishment involved in the curse was perpetual servitude.

34. Where Was Daniel When the Three Jews Were Thrown into the Fiery Furnace?

The question concerning the events described in Dan. 3:12-21 has often been asked, but no authoritative answer can be given as the Bible is silent. It may be that he was in some distant province of the kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar would know enough of Daniel's character to be aware that he would not bow to the image and as he valued his services may have purposely dispatched him to a remote part of the kingdom to avoid the risk of such a conflict as ensued with the other three Jews.

35. How Can We Explain the Seeming Inconsistency between I Sam. 16:18, Where It Is Said David Was a Mighty Valiant Man, and I Sam. 17:33, Where Saul Says: "Thou Art but a Youth"?

It would appear that David's talents were already well known and this statement "by a servant" (tradition says it was Doeg) probably magnified his prowess intentionally, to make a good impression. Still, he was only a youth, though stout of limb and fearless of heart. In I Sam. 17:55, Saul's question to Abner was probably prompted by jealousy. A few years had passed since the shepherd minstrel was the king's harpist and these years may have produced such a change in his appearance—from the smooth-faced

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youth to the bronzed and bearded young soldier—that for the moment he was not recognized by Saul. Or the king might simply have pretended not to know him. In either case, it is not necessary to regard the statements in the Book as inconsistent, since they are clearly capable of reasonable explanation.

36. Did David Give Araunah Fifty Shekels of Silver for His Land as Stated in II Sam. 24:24 or Six Hundred Shekels of Gold as Stated in I Chron. 21:25?

The discrepancy has often been pointed out. The probable explanation is in the attitude of the two writers. The writer of Chronicles is believed to have been an officer of the Temple, perhaps a singer. In all his work he goes into the most minute details about the Temple. It evidently engrossed his life and filled his thoughts. The Temple, as you know, was built on this ground of Araunah's. David probably purchased the threshing floor, as Samuel says, for fifty shekels; but afterward deciding that the Temple should be built there, he bought the whole hill, as the chronicler says, for six hundred shekels. The chronicler, with his mind on the Temple, makes the latter payment his record.

37. What Are We to Think of the Spirit of Personal Revenge That Animates Some of David's Psalms?

The passages in Ps. 119:20; Ps. 5:8-10; Ps. 7:11-17; Ps. 25; Ps. 88:10 and Ps. 69 appear to need explanation as coming from so good a man as David. We

must remember at the outset that these Psalms are accounts of "the free outpouring of a man's feelings and wishes to God in a time of great excitement and not the outpouring of curses upon, or even in the hearing of, the man's enemies." And even in that these Psalms may well be an example to us. Divine love wants our perfect confidence and openness, wants us to be just ourselves, open and just as we are. If in a bad mood, as David was, we can do no better than to pour out our bad moods before God to show him how badly we feel and how much we need his help against those who would harm and hurt us. To be entirely open with God, even to the sharing of our faults and weaknesses, is a great stride in the right direction, and to tell him how badly we need him and how desperate is our position is the beginning of that true relationship with him who fully understands even our frailties and shortcomings.

The *Speaker's Commentary* says: "The Psalmist, contemned and despised by those to whom he had done good and by whom he had been cursed often and persecuted to death, betakes himself at first to prayer as his single refuge; then addresses himself to God, with whom is vengeance, and hurls back the curse which his foes had imprecated upon him upon themselves with a fire and energy which seem to some surprising in this divine collection of hymns. But is a Christian spirit to be expected always in the Psalms? Would the words of Christ have been uttered (Matt. 5:43, 44) if the spirit which animated the Jewish people and is exhibited not infrequently in their annals had been always that which he came to inculcate? Under the Old Covenant calamity, extending from

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father to son, was the meed of transgression; prosperity, vice versa, of obedience; and these prayers of the Psalmist may express the wish that God's providential government of his people should be asserted in the chastisement of the enemy of God and man."

38. Did Not David Sin in Deceiving the Priest (I Sam. 21:1) and Eating the Shew-bread? If So, Did Christ Approve His Act in Matt. 12:3?

David's deception was sinful and his eating the shew-bread was a technical violation of the law. Christ did not express approval of his conduct; he was being assailed by the Jews on questions of the observance of the strict letter of the law and he referred to the incident as an illustration. He reminded them that their great king whom they so highly venerated had broken the command in that particular. He was constantly reproving the Jews for their bondage to the letter of the law and their disregard of its spirit.

39. What Is the Book of Enoch?

The only Scriptural reference to the book of Enoch is that found in Jude, verses 14 and 15, but it is not known whether Jude derived his quotation from the written book itself or from tradition. Several of the early fathers of the Church mention the "writings" and "books" of Enoch as though there were several productions. Justin, Irenæus, Anatolius, Clement and Origen all make such mention, and Tertullian quotes the book as one which was not admitted into the Jewish Canon. It seems to have been known as late as

the eighth and ninth centuries, and then all trace was lost until three manuscript copies of an Ethiopic translation were brought to England by Bruce from Abyssinia in 1773. It has since been translated into English, French and German. The book consists of a series of revelations given to Enoch and Noah. In the fourth part of the book the Messiah is predicted and the final redemption of the world. It should be added that the ablest scholars agree that the composition of the book could not have been earlier than a century before Christ, and possibly only half a century. Dillmann assigns the chief part of it to some Aramæan writer about 110 B. C., and believes it was greatly added to by translators afterward. Macmillans or Nelson & Sons can probably procure it for you.

40. Did the Curse of Ham Apply to All His Descendants?

Ham, the youngest son of Noah, had four sons, Cush, Mizraim, Phut and Canaan (Gen. 10:6). The name, race or nationality of his wife is nowhere given. From Ham were descended the Ethiopians and probably the dark-skinned nations of Africa, as well as the Canaanites of Palestine and Phœnicia and even the Egyptians themselves. Like his brothers, Ham was married at the time of the Deluge, and was saved in the ark, together with his wife, from the general destruction. Egypt is recognized as "the land of Ham" (see Ps. 78:51 and other passages). Thus among Ham's descendants there was a wide variety of races and different grades of complexion, from the primitive Chaldeans to the negroes of the equator. The Bible

narrative shows that Noah's denunciation was directed not against Ham, but against his fourth son, Canaan, and some have held that the curse (Gen. 9:25) was accomplished by the subjugation and extermination of the Canaanites by the Jews during the Palestinian conquest.

41. Did God Approve of Jacob's Duplicity in Dealing with Esau?

His conduct is nowhere approved in the Bible. In fact it was most unjustifiable. The Bible does not conceal the faults or wrongdoing of good men. It tells the story of David's awful crimes without reserve. Jacob's wrongdoing led to his banishment from home and separation from his mother, between whom and himself there appears to have been a very tender affection. He suffered retribution too in being tricked by Laban and in the terrible anxiety he suffered later on, when he heard that his brother was coming to meet him with four hundred men; and still later when his own sons deceived him about Joseph. The whole story of his life shows that he was continually learning by hard experience the evil of his early vices of duplicity and hard bargaining.

42. Who Are the Descendants of Esau?

They are by many believed to have been the successors of the original inhabitants of Idumea and of the Horites. Esau has been called "the father of the Edomites" (Gen. 36:43). With his immense family he retired to Mount Seir, from which they gradually dispossessed the existing population, and held it for

many generations. In the course of the Maccabæan wars, the children of Esau lost their independent existence and became merged in the house of Israel.

43. Where Was the Garden of Eden?

According to many Biblical authorities Eden, described in Gen. 2:8-10, was located in that region of Asia in the neighborhood of the Euphrates, and not far from the supposed site of Babylon. There are, however, several other regions indicated as the probable site of Eden. These include Armenia, the country near the Caspian Sea, the region of the Oxus, Cashmere in upper India, Ceylon, etc. Many attempts have been made to identify various rivers with those mentioned in the story in Genesis. Probably the preponderance of scholarship points to that section where the Euphrates and Tigris unite.

44. Why Did Moses Quit Egypt?

There is a seeming discrepancy between the accounts of this event in Ex. 2:14, 15 and in Heb. 11:25-27. The reason mentioned in Hebrews operated first and that in Exodus later. They are two stages in the same process. If he had been ashamed of his race and without faith in God he would have kept away from the Hebrew quarters and posed as an Egyptian. He went to look after his brethren, though he must have known how deeply it would exasperate the Pharaoh. The writer of Hebrews is fully justified by the account given in Exodus for his contention that Moses showed his faith and courage in what he did. When the crisis developed from his interference and

there was ground for a definite charge against him, then he fled as stated in Exodus.

45. Is Immortality Taught in the Old Testament?

In the Old Testament there are many passages which deal with the natural order of events: birth, life, death, the grave, etc. The great question of immortality was one of which the ancient races had only a dim foreshadowing, although they were by no means ignorant of it, as numerous passages show. Thus, it was written of Enoch that, because he had lived a pious life, God took him, so that he was no more among men. Paul, speaking of Jacob, says he regarded life as a journey, and that all the patriarchs looked forward to a life after death (see Heb. 11:13-16). In Ex. 3:6 the implication is clear that Jehovah is the God of the living patriarchs still, although they had long been dead (see also Isa. 14:9; Job 19:25-27; Ps. 17:15; 49:15; 73:24; Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2, and Eccles. 12:7). It remained for Christ, by his teachings, his death and his resurrection, to bring "life and immortality to light" in the fullest measure. It is only in the clear light of the Gospel that we find the veil removed and the future life fully illuminated.

46. What Were the Grievances That Induced the Ten Tribes to Revolt?

Only the question of taxation appears on the surface, but there had been jealousy on the part of Ephraim from the beginning of the monarchy. Ephraim was a more powerful tribe than any of the others, and wanted

to lead. The Ephraimites were reluctant to accept David as king, because he belonged to the tribe of Judah, and yielded only after seven years of disastrous quarreling. David's removal to Jerusalem of the national capital from Shechem, and the religious capital from Shiloh, was another grievance against the house of Jesse. Solomon's magnificence must have involved heavy taxation on the whole country, while the South alone derived benefit or gratification from it. The compulsory attendance at Jerusalem for the annual feasts would also increase the jealousy which culminated when Rehoboam gave his imprudent answer at his coronation.

47. What Was the Discontent That Spread Among the People of Israel in the Desert?

The explanation of the discontent that spread among the people of Israel (see Num. 11:1-5) is given in the statement that among them there was "a mixed multitude that fell a-lusting." Among this multitude were many who were probably of Egyptian blood and descent, and who recalled the abundance of animal and vegetable food to which they had been accustomed in Egypt (see their plaint in verses 4-6). Their discontent was aggravated by the fact that they were in a gloomy, desolate region, far away from any prospect of the rich abundant country that had been promised. Their dissatisfaction was communicated to the Israelites themselves, and the diet of manna became monotonous. They were thoroughly ungrateful for the heavenly gift and demanded a change of fare. They

had entered the desert with large flocks and herds (see Ex. 12:38); but these had evidently been greatly reduced until they would not have long sufficed to feed such a multitude. The hope was to preserve their flocks, as far as possible, for the new country whither they were bound; but if they consumed them now they would be forced to enter the land of promise empty-handed.

48. Were the Children of Israel Justified in Borrowing of the Egyptians Silver, Gold and Jewels?

The transaction was not regarded on either side as a loan. The Revised Version (Ex. 12:35) correctly translates the words, "They asked of the Egyptians," etc. It was the custom at parting of friends, or on the leaving of a servant, to make a gift. The idea is much like the backsheesh in Oriental lands at this day. The Israelites had fully earned the gifts by long years of unrequited labor, and the Egyptians in the panic were heartily willing to give them anything if they would only go, and go quickly.

49. How Many Times Did Israel Go into Idolatry?

It would be difficult to answer with absolute accuracy. The first allusion to their idolatry is found in Gen. 31:19, when Rachel stole her father's seraphim. Afterward, we find that the Israelites gave evidence of idolatrous practises on the way from Shechem to Bethel; they defiled themselves with idols

in Egypt; later, they worshiped the golden calf, images and stars (Ex. 32); Moloch, Remphan, Chiun, and Baal-Peor, Baal, Baal-berith, Ashtoreth, Chemosh, Milcom, the sun, the moon, were all worshiped in succession. Even after possessing Palestine they went astray after the idols of the land times without number.

50. Were Any of the Kings of Israel and Judah Crowned?

Yes; there are frequent references in the Old Testament to both crowns and diadems, the latter sometimes being used for both. The high priest wore a plate of gold in front of the mitre. It was tied behind by a ribbon (see Ex. 29:6; 39:30, 31). The same word used to describe this in the original is used to describe the diadem which Saul wore in battle and which was brought to David (II Sam. 1:10). It was used at the coronation of Joash (II Kings 11:12). David took a crown of precious stones from King Ammon at Rabbah, and it was used as the state crown of Judah (see II Sam. 12:30).

51. Why Was Israel Ruled by Judges?

In the days of the Judges in Israel the rule was patriarchal. They were chosen for their moral fitness, their experience and their rectitude; yet none of the most notable among them was of priestly lineage. Some were appointed to do particular services, for which they were specially qualified, or to correct evils that had arisen in the community. One commentator writes: "God allowed them Judges in the persons of faithful men, who acted, for the most part, as agents

of the divine will—regents of the invisible King—and who would be more inclined to act as loyal vassals of Jehovah than kings, who would develop notions of independent right and royal privileges, which would draw attention from their true faith in the theocracy. In this greater dependence of the Judges upon the divine King, we see the secret of their institution.” That Israel enjoyed more liberty and happiness under the Judges than under the monarchy is shown in the record; yet they were led by the example of the nations around them to clamor for a king. Read the warning written to them by Samuel in I Sam. 8:10-19—an experience which was literally fulfilled.

52. Who Composed the Armies of Israel?

In these warlike times it may be interesting to learn something about the armies of Israel. They are first mentioned in Ex. 7:4. They were collected by the sound of trumpets (Judg. 3:27), by special messengers and extraordinary means, and enrolled by the chief scribe (Judg. 3:27; Judg. 6:35; Judg. 19:29; II Kings 25:19). Called the “host” and the “armies of the living God” (Deu. 23:9; I Sam. 17:26), they were composed of infantry and later had horsemen and chariots (Num. 11:21; I Kings 1:5; I Kings 4:26). They were divided into three divisions, van and rear, and were divided into companies of thousands (Judg. 7:16; Jos. 6:9; Num. 31:14; II Kings 1:9, 11. Though commanded by the captain of the host they were often led by the king in person (II Sam. 2:8; I Sam. 8:20; I Kings 22 ch.). All males from twenty years and upward were liable to serve, while those who had builded a house, were lately betrothed or

newly married were exempt (Num. 1:2, 3; Deu. 20:5; Deu. 20:7; Deu. 24:5). Sometimes the armies consisted of the whole nation and they were supplied with arms from public armories (Judg. 20:11; II Chron. 11:12; II Chron. 26:14). Before going to war Israel's armies were numbered and reviewed, were required to keep from iniquity and to consult the Lord (II Sam. 18:1, 2, 4; Deu. 23:9; Judg. 1:1). The Ark of God was frequently brought to lead these armies and they were attended by priests with trumpets who led in the singing of God's praises, who directed their movements (Josh. 6:6, 7; Num. 10:9; II Chron. 20:21, 22; Josh. 8:1, 2). Thus with the aid of God they were all-powerful, but without him they were easily overcome (Lev. 26:3, 7, 8; Lev. 26:17; Num. 14:42, 43).

53. When the Prophet Isaiah Brought the Shadow Ten Degrees Backward Did That Not Interfere with the Movements of the Other Planets?

The dial of Ahaz, it is assumed, was in the form of a staircase upon which a shadow was made to fall from a pillar, the declination or elevation of the shadow measuring the hours of the day. There is no need to imply, as some have done, that the earth retrograded on its axis; for the miracle might have been produced by the miraculous refraction of the sun's rays on the dial in question without disturbing the divinely appointed order of nature. This might have been effected by a partial eclipse, or by simple refraction through the interposition of a different medium. It is a fact

known to scientists that refraction takes place when the rays of light pass through a denser medium.

54. What Became of the Prophet Isaiah?

Little is known respecting the circumstances of Isaiah's life. His father's name was Amoz (not the prophet Amos). Isaiah resided in Jerusalem, not far from the Temple. He was married and had two sons, whose names are given in Scripture, and he called his wife "a prophetess," showing that she was in active sympathy with and had a share in his spiritual vocation. There is a tradition that he suffered martyrdom under the wicked king Manasseh by being sawn in two, and the scene of his martyrdom is even pointed out under an old mulberry tree, near the Pool of Siloam. Josephus (in *Antiquities* 10:3, 1) mentions the massacre of the Hebrew prophets by Manasseh, although Isaiah is not named among them. It has been maintained, however, by several good authorities that Isaiah lived to a great age and died from natural causes. His prophetical office began in his twentieth year and was continuous until his eightieth year.

55. Was Joseph's Wife Converted from the Egyptian Heathenism Before He Married Her?

Presumably not. She was the daughter of the priest of On, and was no doubt a believer in the religion of her fathers. She was even named after one of the Egyptian deities, *Neith*. It is fair to assume, however, that after marriage she took the religion of her husband. She became the mother of Ephraim and Manasseh.

56. Did Jacob Really See God Face to Face When at the Brook Jabbok?

Jacob's mysterious wrestling has been a fruitful source of difficulty and misinterpretation. Jacob had left the land of Canaan, full of guilt and liable to wrath, and he was to enter it amid sharp contending, such as might lead to great searchings of heart, deep spiritual abasement and renunciation of all sinful and crooked devices. This was the conflict he had to undergo with "the angel of the Lord's presence." Jacob's inquiry for the name of his antagonist was unanswered. But he called the place *Peniel* ("the Face of God") in token of his nearness to Jehovah while the great struggle was going on. He had been overcome, yet, through the strength of his faith, he had prevailed and got the blessing.

57. What Were the Prominent Jewish Feasts?

The Jewish feast days were appointed by God as appointed, solemn, eucharistic meetings (Ex. 23:14; Isa. 1:14; Lev. 23:4; II Chron. 8:13; Isa. 1:13; Ps. 122:4). All males and children from the twelfth year on were required to attend and did so gladly, going up to them in large companies, though they often encountered difficulties and dangers in so doing (Ex. 23:17; Luke 2:42; Ps. 122:1, 2; Ps. 42:4; Luke 2:44; Ps. 84:6, 7). The feast times were seasons of joy and gladness, sacrificing and entertainments (Ps. 42:4; I Sam. 1:4, 9; I Kings 9:25). The feasts were:

57A. 1—The Feast of the Passover.

This was ordained by God to commence the fourteenth of the first month at even (Ex. 12:2, 6, 18)

and lasted seven days (Ex. 12:15). It was called the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Mark 14:1) from the circumstance that no leavened bread was to be eaten or kept in the house during it (Ex. 12:15; Deu. 16:3). On the first day the Pascal lamb was to be eaten and the feast was to be observed as commemorating the passing over the first-born and the deliverance of Israel from bondage (Ex. 12:6, 18; 13:17).

58. 2—The Feast of Pentecost.

This feast was held the fiftieth day after offering the first sheaf of barley harvest (Lev. 23:15, 16) and was called Feast of Harvest, Feast of Weeks, Day of Firstfruits, Day of Pentecost (Ex. 23:16; 34:22; Num. 28:26; Acts 2:1). It was to be perpetually observed and all males were required to attend as a holy convocation and time of holy rejoicing (Ex. 23:16, 17; Lev. 23:21; Deu. 16:11, 12). At this feast the firstfruits of bread were presented and sacrifices were made (Lev. 23:17, 18, 19). The law from Mount Sinai was given upon the Day of Pentecost, as was the Holy Ghost to the apostles on one of these days (Ex. 19:1, 11; Acts 2:1-3).

59. 3—The Feast of Tabernacles.

The Feast of Tabernacles, held after harvest and vintage, began the fifteenth of the seventh month and lasted seven days (Deu. 16:13; Lev. 23:34, 39; Lev. 23:41; Deu. 16:13-15). It was called the "feast of ingathering" (Ex. 34:23). The first and last days were days of holy convocations

at which sacrifices were offered (Lev. 23:35, 39; Lev. 23:37). It was to be observed with rejoicing and perpetually. During the feast the people dwelt in booths, bore branches of palms, drew water from the Pool of Siloam and sang hosannas, all to commemorate the sojourn of Israel in the desert (Lev. 23:42; Lev. 23:40; Isa. 12:3; Ps. 118:24-29; Lev. 23:43).

60. 4—The Feast of the New Moon.

This holy day was observed on the first day of the month and was celebrated with blowing of trumpets and the making of sacrifices (Num. 10:10; Ps. 81:3, 4; Num. 28:11-15). It was a season for inquiring of God's messengers and worship in God's house, also for entertainments (II Kings 4:23; Isa. 66:23; I Sam. 20:5, 18). The feast was observed with great solemnity, therefore the mere outward observance thereof was hateful to God (I Chron. 23:31; Isa. 1:13, 14).

61. 5—The Feast of Trumpets.

The Feast of Trumpets was held the first day of the seventh month as a memorial of blowing of trumpets. It was a holy convocation and that at which sacrifices were made (Lev. 23:24, 25; Num. 29:2-6).

62. 6—The Feast of Purim, or Lots.

This feast, instituted by Mordecai, began the fourteenth of the twelfth month, and was held to commemorate the defeat of Haman's wicked design (Est. 9:20; Est. 3:7-15; Est. 9:17). It lasted two days and was made the occasion of much joy, of rest and of sending presents (Est. 9:17-19, 21). The Jews, after

63-65 Difficult Bible Questions

it was confirmed by royal authority, bound themselves to keep the day (Est. 9:27, 28, 29).

63. 7—The Feast of Dedication.

The Feast of Dedication was held in the winter month Chisleu, to commemorate the cleansing of the temple after its defilement by Antiochus (John 10:22; Dan. 11:31).

64. 8—The Feast of Sabbatical Year.

Every seventh year the Jews kept the Feast of Sabbatical Year. It was a sabbath for the land at which all field laborers stopped, the fruits of the earth were common property, debts were remitted, all Hebrew servants were released (Lev. 25:2; Ex. 23:11; Lev. 25:4, 5; Ex. 23:11; Deu. 15:1-3; Ex. 21:3). For neglecting this feast the Jews were threatened, and the seventy-year captivity was a punishment therefor. After captivity it was restored to them (Lev. 26:34; II Chron. 36:20, 21; Neh. 10:31).

65. 9—The Feast of Jubilee.

The Feast of Jubilee was held every fiftieth year and began on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 25:8, 10; 25:9). It was called "Year of Liberty," "Year of the Redeemed," "Acceptable Year" (Ezek. 46:17; Isa. 63:4; Isa. 61:2). It was specially holy. Respecting it there were these enactments: cessation of all field labor, the fruits of the earth to be common property, redemption of sold property, restoration of all inheritances and release of all Hebrew servants (Lev. 25:12; 11, 23-27, 10, 13, 28; Lev. 27:24; Lev. 25:40, 41, 54).

66. Of How Many Days Was the Jewish Year Composed?

By Num. 14:34 and Ezek. 4:4-6 the application of a day for a year in prophecy is authorized. A Bible month, according to Gen. 7:11; 8:4, is thirty days. The beginning of the Deluge is placed on the second month and seventeenth day; the ark rested on the seventh month and seventeenth day, and Gen. 7:24 shows this period to be just 150 days, a period of five months, at thirty days to the month. Twelve of such months would constitute a year of 360 days. The year of twelve months is indicated in I Kings 4:7; I Chron. 27:1-15.

67. Were the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel Totally Distinct?

The separation of the monarchy into two took place shortly after Solomon's death, as described in I Kings 12. After the downfall of the ten tribes, the southern branch, consisting of Judah and Benjamin, continued to occupy the land they had formerly occupied until they too were carried away captive.

68. Who Were the Maccabees?

The family of Maccabees, which is treated of in the books of the Maccabees, derives its name from Judas, the third son of Mattathias, who was called Judas Maccabeus—that is, Judas the Hammerer. This appellation was given him because of his mighty assaults on the Syrians. The family were leaders against an attempt on the part of Antiochus Epiphanes to force Greek worship upon the Jews in

the year following 175 B. C. The trouble arose in the town of Modin, where Mattathias and his five sons lived. In 167 B. C. the leadership in the revolt fell upon Judas, and by the support of loyal Jews he was enabled to restore the temple worship. In subsequent battles for political independence he became prominent as a general, but fell in 161 B. C., in the battle of Eleasa. His brother Jonathan succeeded him. They were rulers in a way, but dependent on Rome. The books of the Maccabees relate the history of those times and are not considered inspired. Though Judas Maccabeus and his followers were brave men imbued with high ideals, they are in no wise guides for us, and the books of the Maccabees contain much that is at least questionable theology and not in harmony with the teaching of inspired Scriptures.

69. Was Moses the Author of the First Five Books of the Bible?

The question has been argued now for many years. The present tendency is to a belief that Moses left records which, after his death, were woven into the continuous narrative we now possess. The references of Christ and his Apostles to "Moses and the prophets" imply that the belief that Moses was the author of the books that bear his name was prevalent at that day. There are, however, expressions scattered through the five books which were certainly not written by Moses. A specimen instance is Genesis 36:31: "These are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel." That verse was evidently written after there had been kings in Israel. Whether these

passages indicate that the books were not written by Moses, or whether they were inserted after his death, is a disputed question. There is, however, good reason to believe that the work of Moses formed the basis of the books, even if he did not actually write them in their present form.

70. Who Was the Mother of Moses' Children?

Moses' children were by two wives, one an Arabian woman (Ex. 2:21 and 3:1) and the other a Cushite woman (Num. 12:1). His sons, whose careers were comparatively obscure, he evidently regarded as unfitted to succeed him as leader of the host, so he chose Joshua (Deut. 34:9), and "laid hands upon him" in token of divine approval of the choice (see Josh. 1:2). All that we know of the home relations of Moses is what Scripture relates, which is comparatively meager. Read the more detailed account of Moses' life in Josephus' historical work.

71. What Was the Method of Reckoning in Antediluvian Days so as to Account for the Long Age Accredited to the Patriarchs?

The method of reckoning time in antediluvian days is uncertain. Bible students are divided in opinion, but the leading commentators are led to conclude that Moses meant *solar* and not *lunar* years, averaging practically as long as ours. Josephus, the Jewish historian, writing on this point, says in his *Antiquities* (1:3:3): "Let no one, on comparing the lives of the ancients with our lives, make the shortness of our lives, at present, an argument that neither did they attain so

long a duration of life." This was the Jewish view. On the other hand, Pliny, Scaliger and others assert that the ancients must have computed time differently. The ancient Babylonian year seems to have consisted of twelve lunar months of thirty days each, intercalary months being added at certain periods.

72. Who Were the Pharaohs of Joseph's Time?

Joseph, it is reckoned by authorities, was born about 1913 B. C. He was sold into Egypt about 1895 B. C. He died 1802 B. C. As to the identification of the Pharaohs of his time there are various opinions. Wilkinson identifies the first Pharaoh of Joseph's experience with Osvitesen I, while Bunsen holds that the monarch was Osirtesen III, and Osborn claims he was Apophis. McClintock and Strong believe that the Pharaoh of the period of Joseph's imprisonment was one of the eighth (Memphitic) dynasty whose names are all unrecorded, but who were contemporary with the twelfth (Diospolitic) dynasty and the fifteenth (Shepherd) dynasty. The time of Joseph's deliverance from prison, according to the chronology adopted by many scholars, falls under the reign of Apophis, one of the shepherd kings (the fourth ruler of the fifteenth dynasty); but it is believed that by this time their power was declining and that they were then in possession of only a part of Egypt, the rest being governed by two other monarchs of different dynasties.

73. Did God Employ Evil Spirits to Trouble Saul?

In I Sam. 16: 14, 15, Saul's servants said: "Behold, now an evil spirit from God troubleth thee." The

ancients did not know the difference between cases of mental disease from cases of demoniac possession and hence they attributed many maladies to the influence of evil spirits that had their origin only in physical or mental ill health. We can readily receive the truth that diseases affecting the body may be tolerated by God as useful for judgment and correction, and thus also diseases of the mind may be used by God for a like purpose. The evil spirit of God afflicting Saul was some form of melancholia. Matthew Henry says: "He grew fretful and peevish and discontented, timorous and suspicious, ever and anon starting and trembling."

Bishop Wordsworth says: "Saul became melancholy, gloomy, irritable, envious, suspicious and distracted as a man wandering about in the dark." Elliott's *Commentary* says: "It was a species of insanity, fatal alike to the poor victim of the malady and to the prosperity of the kingdom over which he ruled." But be it what it may have been, it certainly had some perfectly natural cause and was not a judgment of God through the agency of evil spirit.

74. Who Founded the School of the Prophets?

There were schools in ancient Israel taught by the prophets, and the pupils were called "sons of the prophets." The earliest mentioned are those established by Samuel, at Gibeah and Naioth, to which there are vague references in I Sam. 19:20 and other places. The prophets whom Obadiah hid from Jezebel were probably the pupils in such schools as these. Another school at Bethel is mentioned in II Kings 2:3, and still another at Jericho in the fifth verse of the same

chapter. The reference to a school at Gilgal (II Kings 4:38-44) would seem to indicate a kind of college where there was a common table. In II Kings 6:1-4 we have the account of the building of such a college. There are the Bible references. If you want further information the rabbis give it, but you must take it for what it is worth. They say that Methuselah established a school before the Flood; that Abraham was a student at three years of age, and that in his young manhood he studied under Melchizedek, and they relate other legends of a similar kind.

75. What Were the Different Questions With Which the Queen of Sheba Tested Solomon's Wisdom?

There is no record, but there are traditions which cannot be verified at this late day. According to these traditions, the queen produced two bouquets, one of which was of natural flowers and the other of artificial flowers, so excellent in imitation that an ordinary observer could not tell which was the natural. She challenged the king to distinguish without leaving his throne. He ordered his attendants to let bees into the room, and as they alighted on the natural flowers he rightly indicated the bouquet. Another was the challenge to fill a cup with water that came neither from earth nor sky. This Solomon did by collecting the perspiration from a hard-driven horse. A third was to thread a jewel. This the king did by inducing a small worm to crawl through the minute perforation. Lastly, to decide which of two groups of children, dressed exactly alike, were boys and which girls, Solomon ordered bowls of water to be placed before

them that they might wash. He rightly decided by the way each group turned up their sleeves before washing. These are some of the questions tradition attributes to the queen.

76. Where Did Solomon Die?

The Bible record of his death is in I Kings 11:43 and II Chron. 9:31. It simply relates that he slept with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. Farrar narrates the tradition current among the Jews as to his death. It is that Solomon went up to the Temple to worship. He stood there engaged in prayer, a picturesque figure with his long, white hair floating over the imperial mantle, and wearing the gold crown that Bathsheba, his mother, gave him. As he stood leaning on his staff death came to him, but the staff supported the corpse. The priests saw that he was dead, but feared to touch him, because on his dead hand was the famous ring with which he had worked wonders of sorcery. But a mouse ran out from its hole and gnawed at the leather at the foot of the staff until it slipped and the great king fell on the floor and his crown rolled in the dust.

77. Was the Lament of Lamech That of a Penitent?

In Gen. 4:23 the outburst of Lamech showed a proud and presumptuous self-confidence: "The boast of a bold, bad man, elated with the possession of arms," which his son Tubal-cain had invented, and with which he had just found that he could take life at will. It cannot be determined whether Lamech

was speaking of an actual occurrence, or merely asserting what he would do if opportunity offered. The translators, however, seem to agree that Lamech had already avenged himself on some young descendant of Cain who had wounded him, and that in this speech he was attempting to justify the homicide on the ground of self-defense.

78. Was Cain Repentant When Driven Out After the Murder of His Brother?

Gen. 4:14 gives the lament of Cain when he was driven out, an exile and wanderer, after the murder of his brother. He was overwhelmed with a sense of the severity of the sentence, but there was no sign of penitence, no cry for pardon, no expression of regret or sorrow. It was the cry of a selfish soul about to be deprived of all its material belongings and driven forth into the wilderness. Cain was afraid that some of the kinsmen of Abel would find him and slay him in revenge. It is evident from various passages that the population had multiplied considerably since the expulsion from Eden, although the record of Genesis deals only with a few individuals until we reach the latter part of chapter 4.

79. Did Solomon Repent Before His Death?

There is no record in the Bible of his having repented, but there is a tradition to that effect. Dean Farrar relates a tradition current among the Jews also as to the circumstances of his death. It is that he died while worshiping in the Temple that he had built. It is said that as he stood there, leaning on

his staff, the gold crown on his head Bathsheba, his mother, gave him, his long white hair flowing over the royal mantle, death came to him. He still stood, supported by his staff. The priests saw that he was dead, but feared to touch the body, because on his finger was the ring which was believed to possess magical qualities of terrible potency. But a little mouse ran out and gnawed at the leather at the foot of the staff, until it slipped. Then the great king fell, and his crown rolled in the dust.

80. Did Jacob Wrestle with an Angel or with God?

The passage in Gen. 32:30, notwithstanding Jacob's expression, is interpreted elsewhere in Scripture as referring to an angel (see Hosea 12:5), the conclusion of commentators being that he was the "Angel of the Covenant." Jacob was favored with visions, and Calvin, Henssenberg, Hengstenberg and others have held that this experience was of a similar character to that of the vision of the ladder. The majority, however, interpret it as an actual event, the object of the revelation being to revive the spirit of the patriarch and arm him with confidence in God.

NEW TESTAMENT SUBJECTS

81. What Is the Meaning of "Urim and Thummim"?

Various commentators and translators have differed concerning the real meaning of the words. Some translators give its equivalent as "light and perfection." "Urim" is synonymous with "Teraphim" ("lights" or "fires"). Josephus identifies the Urim and Thummim with the sardonyxes on the shoulders of the ephod, which were bright when all was auspicious and dark when disaster threatened. Others held that they were the Divine Name, one in forty-two letters, the other in seventy-two letters. Still others asserted that they were prophetic symbols, and there were many who held that the Urim and Thummim were identical with the twelve stones upon which the tribes' names were engraved, and that they were employed in oracular consultation, the stones becoming illuminated in rapid succession, according to the character of the message and the order in which the letters or engraved symbols were employed. Michaelis writes that the Urim and Thummim were three stones, on one of which was written "Yes," on another "No," while the third was left blank or neutral, and these were used in lot-drawing and in the deciding of evidence. Kalisch identifies them with the twelve tribal gems in a condition of illumination. The high priest, by concentrating his thoughts on the qualities they

represented, passed into a prophetic trance. Light-foot and others took the same view. It is quite clear that the Urim and Thummim were well known to the patriarchs as an appointed means of divination.

82. Why Does the Book of Acts Close So Abruptly, Saying Nothing of Paul's Death?

The suggestion has been made that Luke intended to write a third work recounting the events subsequent to his second work, but was prevented, or that he did write it and it has been lost. The more natural supposition is that he died during or at the close of Paul's imprisonment, and that he concluded in his history all the events up to the end of his own life. It is reasonable to suppose that if he had lived to see Paul acquitted he would have recorded the fact. The close of the book has the appearance of a work interrupted by death. It is evident, however, that Luke was with Paul when the second epistle to Timothy was written (see II Tim. 4:11), and at that time some kind of trial had taken place which Luke does not record (see II Tim. 4:17). The Acts was probably written during Paul's imprisonment at Rome or completed at that time and was sent out before the final issue of Paul's case was determined. The general opinion is that after Paul's acquittal he went on another missionary journey, penetrating as far as to Spain, and that only on his second imprisonment was he martyred. Luke's silence on these matters leads to the conclusion that he died about the end of those two years mentioned in his concluding verses.

83. Did the Apostles Forgive Sins?

There is no record in Scripture of any of the apostles exercising in a literal and authoritative sense the power of personally forgiving sins. They all, without exception, preached the forgiveness of sins through faith in and acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour. The passages in John 20: 21-23 is one that is frequently cited by Catholics in support of the claim of their church of the power to forgive sins. But it has no relation to the Roman Catholic Church, which did not exist until long after apostolic times. Further, the best commentators hold that "in any literal or authoritative sense, or as a personal act," this power of forgiveness of sins was never exercised by any one of the apostles, and plainly was never understood by them as a power which they possessed or which had been conveyed to them. All they were authorized to do, or ever did, was in a ministerial or declarative sense to interpret the offer of divine clemency to repentant sinners. No Catholic can point to a single text of Scripture to prove that there is any other mediator than Jesus Christ, or a single text to prove that priests can personally forgive sins. There are, however, other commentators and large church bodies who hold differently (see Augsburg Confession and Lutheran Catechism). These latter believe that there exists in the church of God "a peculiar church power which Christ has given to his church on earth to forgive the sins of penitent sinners unto them, but to retain the sins of the unpenitent, as long as they do not repent"; that the called ministers forgive sins and absolve those who repent and in so doing act as the instruments of God or in virtue of the external office of the ministry

and that "this is as valid and certain in heaven as if Christ dealt with us himself."

84. What Was the Contention Between Barnabas and Paul?

The contention referred to in Acts 15:39 is believed to have grown out of the fact that Mark "had either tired of the work, or shrunk from the danger and fatigue that yet lay before them." Barnabas had expressed the desire to take Mark with them (Col. 4:10), which Paul opposed. Barnabas was probably unwilling to adopt Paul's severe attitude toward the young worker, and desired to give him another trial. In this view, Barnabas seems to have been justified, since Mark did retrieve his character later, and he and Paul became fully reconciled (Col. 4:10, 11; II Tim. 4:11).

85. Was Cornelius Converted Before Peter Was Called to Visit Him?

Cornelius is reckoned by Julian and other noted writers as one of the few persons of distinction who embraced Christianity in its earliest stages. His religious position before his interview with Peter has been the subject of much debate. It has been contended that he was a Gentile who, having renounced idols, worshiped the true God, but not after the manner of the Jews, and that he gave much alms. He probably belonged to the same class as Queen Candace's Treasurer, and who had benefited by their contact with the Jewish people so far as to have become convinced that theirs was the true God. Cornelius was regarded as

having been selected of God to become the firstfruit of the Gentiles, but he was not converted until his meeting with Peter. In Acts 10 we are told of his vision, and of the divine instruction to him to send to Joppa for Peter, who had already been prepared by the noonday vision on the housetop for the messengers. It was not until Peter reached the house of Cornelius and explained his mission that the Holy Ghost fell on all present and they were baptized.

86. Where Was the "Upper Room" Located When the First Gathering of Disciples and Converts Took Place?

The "upper room" mentioned in Acts 1, where the first gathering of disciples and converts was held after the ascension, may have been in the house of one of the apostles (or of John Mark, as some suppose), but the general view is that it was probably the upper chamber in a house, the owners of which made it a custom to hire out such rooms for meeting purposes. This custom, it is claimed, was known in Jerusalem long before Christ.

87. How Long a Period of Preparation Did John the Baptist Pass Before Beginning His Public Mission?

There are no data from which to determine how long a period of preparation was passed by John the Baptist before his public mission began. Banus, one of his instructors (mentioned by Josephus), records that he was with John three years in the wilderness, sharing his austerities. He doubtless spent a much larger

period in preparation, however, but the whole of his life from childhood until about his thirtieth year is hidden in obscurity. His public ministry began about A. D. 25, and his death occurred in A. D. 38.

88. Who Was the "Elect Lady" to Whom John Addressed His Second Epistle?

Her name is not known, unless the Greek word "Kyria," translated "lady," be a proper name. Some have regarded it as the Greek form of Martha. She was evidently a woman well known to the apostle. He had, as we infer from the epistle, been at the house of her sister, where he met her children. The idea formerly entertained that under this name the apostle was writing to a church is now generally abandoned.

89. What Hymns Were in Use in the Christian Church in Apostolic Days?

That hymns were in use in the Christian Church in apostolic days we gather from Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Heb. 2:12, etc. These were probably adaptations from the old Hebrew psalms. The hymn which Jesus and his disciples sang at the Last Supper is believed to have been the latter part of the *Hallel*—the psalms sung by the Jews on the night of the Passover—and which included parts of Ps. 113, 114 and 118. But it is made clear, by other passages, that very early in the history of the Christian Church another class of vocal music came into use in worship (see Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). These "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" were what Professor Schaff has

termed "a lyrical discourse to the feelings"—a metrical form chosen for the expression of experiences that would excite pious emotions and draw the hearer to the source of joy and blessing. The revival hymn, as we know it to-day, had its prototype in those early Christian spiritual songs, which it may be reasonably supposed held forth the Gospel of a free salvation through Christ and the joys and rewards of heaven as compensation for the sorrows and sufferings of the persecuted believers here on earth.

**90. Was John's Dress of Camel's Hair and a
Leathern Girdle the Distinctive Dress of a
Prophet?**

Some have seen in John's dress a designed imitation of that of the great Elijah, but there is as much reason against this contention as there is for it. In the towns great attention was paid to dress and many fine garments of beautiful texture and colors were worn; but in the desert districts and among the tribesmen a much simpler mode of dress was in vogue. It was often made out of homespun cloth out of the materials provided by flocks of camels, sheep or goats. The shirt, or tunic, was fashioned of the long hair of the camel. It has been suggested that the expression "camel's hair" was a recognized trade term for a certain kind of cloth. The leathern girdle was provided from the skin of the animals, and the mantle, or cape, was, in all probability, a sheep skin with the wool left on—a kind of dress still worn by the peasants of Palestine. Kitto says of John's dress: "He was clad in raiment which would wear well and required no care

—such as Elijah and other ancient prophets wore, not as distinctive of their profession (for John had not yet been called to be a prophet), but as the dress of poor men, and best suited to their condition. It is a dress which may still be seen every day in the Syro-Arabian countries: a rough but stout and serviceable robe of camel's hair, or of camel's hair and wool combined, bound about the waist by a broad girdle of stiff leather."

91. Was John's Baptism of Divine Authority?

John himself regarded his mission as a lower one and as not having the divine authority of the Saviour's work. He considered the existing Judaism as a stepping-stone by which the Gentiles were to arrive at the Messianic kingdom. He taught with the authority of a prophet who in his long wilderness sojourn had received spiritual inspiration and guidance for his work. "Repent and be baptized" was the order of his mission. His baptism, however, was not regarded as conferring an immediate consecration, but as being preparatory; and the disciples of Jesus, taking this view, rebaptized the followers of John (see Acts 19: 3-5). Commentators explain that the point of contrast between the baptism administered by John and that by Jesus was not a personal one, but was between water baptism unto repentance and the promised baptism of the Spirit unto a new life. John himself said (Matt. 3: 11): "I indeed baptize you with water . . . but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." As to the significance of Christ's baptism, these simple disciples had not yet been enlightened. They were accordingly baptized by Paul himself "unto the

whole fulness of the new economy as now opened up to their believing minds.”

92. Who Was John Whom Jesus Loved?

John was the younger of the two sons of Zebedee, a Galilean fisherman. His father appears to have been in comparatively good circumstances, owning a vessel and having hired servants. John had not the natural vehemence of his brethren, but was of a mild and gentle disposition, thoughtful and affectionate. Nor did he join in their strifes for leadership. His whole heart seemed to be centered on Jesus, and our Lord, recognizing this supreme attachment, made him his “bosom disciple.” The disciple, in his writings in later years, referred to himself as the one “whom Jesus loved.” His Gospel and Epistles all breathe a deeper spirituality, a more complete absorption and a higher degree of inspiration than those of other writers of the New Testament books. Wholly different was the character of David. He was the warrior and soldier-king as well as the sweet singer. His love and his hate were both ardent; hence we find him in Ps. 139 “hating his enemies with a perfect hatred”—the language of zeal untempered by moderation or forgiveness. It was the expression of human feeling, and not like that of John, whose feelings were inspired by personal contact with the Saviour, who taught us to forgive our enemies.

93. In View of His Being Espoused to Mary, What Relation Was Joseph to Our Saviour?

“Espoused” means “betrothed.” Joseph was the nominal father before the Jewish law, but it is ex-

pressly stated in the Scripture that Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit. James the Younger and Joses, according to the usual interpretation, were the sons of Salome, the sister of Mary and wife of Cleophas (see John 19:25; Acts 1:13; Matt. 27:56; Mark 15:40). This is the view of many commentators, who hold that the term "brethren" was applied to cousins and others of the same kindred. On the other hand, there are not a few who hold that the brothers in question were later sons of Mary herself.

94. What Became of Mary the Mother of Christ?

The New Testament records go no further than the fact that Jesus on the cross commended his mother to the care of the apostle John, and to mention her later as a member of the company of believers who continued together in prayer before Pentecost (Acts 1:14). Traditions vary as to the length of her life after this, some saying two, some saying twenty-four years. Many traditions grew up about the later years of Mary's life. Her death is variously reported to have occurred at Ephesus and Jerusalem. Catholics came later to hold the belief that she did not die but was translated bodily into heaven. While belief in the "Assumption," as this is called, has not officially been made a point of Catholic doctrine, Catholic theologians generally class it among those truths which it would be "rash to deny." The feast of the Assumption has been celebrated since the fifth or sixth century. Of course there is no historic or Scriptural ground for thinking that Mary died in any other than the natural way, or

that her body escaped the ordinary natural processes of destruction.

95. What Was the Offense for Which the Nicolaitans Were Condemned?

The offense for which the Nicolaitans were condemned has given rise to much conjecture. They are believed to have attempted to graft on the Christian faith pagan licentiousness and idolatry. One writer says: "They made their liberty a cloak for cowardice and licentiousness and united brave words with evil deeds. They mingled in the orgies of idolatrous feasts, and brought the impurities of those feasts into the meetings of the Christian Church. All this was done as part of a system, supported by a doctrine, accompanied by the boast of a prophetic illumination" (II Pet. 2:1, 2).

96. When Did Joseph, the Foster-Father of Jesus, Die?

Commentators do not claim to be able to fix the date of Joseph the Carpenter's death. Some hold that it must have taken place before Jesus began his public ministry. In support of this they point to the fact that Joseph is not mentioned in connection with the wedding feast at Cana. Others believe that Joseph must have passed away before the crucifixion, otherwise he would have been at the cross with Mary. Under the circumstances nothing definite can be stated on the matter. Christian tradition asserts that Joseph was over eighty when espoused and that he lived to be a very old man.

97. Who Was Onesimus?

The epistle of Paul to Philemon is linked very closely with the apostle's epistle to the Colossians, and both were carried by the same messenger, Onesimus, who was the slave of Philemon and a fugitive from justice. Under Paul's teachings he was converted to Christianity, and, being induced to return to his master, was made the bearer of this letter, in which Paul recommended him as no longer a mere servant but also a brother in Christ. Apphia, mentioned in verse 2, was the wife of Philemon, and Archippus, the Colossian pastor, is supposed to have been a near relative, dwelling in Philemon's house. The epistle was regarded by the ancient church as the unquestioned work of Paul himself. It was written, as authorities believe, by the apostle early in the year A. D. 62, during his first captivity in Rome, and its whole object was an appeal for the restoration of Onesimus to Philemon's favor. While the longer epistle to the Colossians was dictated to an amanuensis, this message to Philemon was wholly in Paul's own handwriting. The last line, "Written from Rome to Philemon, by Onesimus, a servant," does not mean that Onesimus was the writer but the bearer. It was as though a letter-writer to-day should write on the envelope, "To Mr. So-and-So, per kindness of Mr. Smith."

98. Was Paul Acquitted at His Trial Before the Emperor at Rome?

It would appear from II Tim. 4:6 that Paul was condemned. There is good reason, however, for believing that Paul was acquitted at the end of the two

years mentioned (Acts 28:30). He then appears to have gone to Ephesus and other places, penetrating as far as Spain. Clement, the apostle Paul's disciple, mentioned in Phil. 4:3, says that he went to "the extremity of the West," which at that time would mean Spain. He was harassed and worried by errors creeping into his churches, and did not, it is thought, stay long in one place. Jerome says that Paul was "dismissed by Nero that he might preach Christ's Gospel in the West." Returning, he appears to have again visited Ephesus and Crete. A passage in his Epistle to Titus (3:12) indicates an intention to spend a winter at Nicopolis, a city on the western coast of Greece. It is believed that he did so, and was arrested there and taken again to Rome. His second imprisonment, as we gather from the two epistles to Timothy, which, it is thought, were written at this time, appears to have been much more severe. Nero's persecution of the Christians was raging, and Paul could not, and did not, expect to escape condemnation. It is believed that he was put to death late in May or early in June, 68, five years after he was released from his first imprisonment.

99. How Could Paul Be a Roman and Also a Jew?

Roman citizenship was bought and sold at high prices in the reign of Claudius. Paul, born a Jew, also inherited the rights of a Roman citizen at his birth, either by the purchase of citizenship by some ancestor or as a reward granted to his father or grandfather for services to the state. The rights of citizenship, free-

dom to be considered equal to Romans, was sometimes granted to whole provinces and cities, and frequently to families. In the latter case it was transmitted from father to son in the direct line.

100. Was Paul Led of the Holy Spirit to Go Up to Jerusalem That Last Time When He Was Arrested?

We are aware that a prominent teacher has urged the view that Paul's last journey was made contrary to the will of the Spirit and in opposition to definite warning, but it does not seem to us tenable. Paul evidently believed it was his duty to go. Previously in so many instances he had yielded to the intimations of the Spirit that we have a right to believe that he would have done so in this case if any had been made. The mere threat or prediction that he would suffer would not deter him. He was ready, as he said (Acts 21:13), not to be bound only, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. Those are not the words of a man wilfully and perversely opposing the Holy Spirit. Agabus professed to be speaking in the name of the Holy Spirit (Acts 21:11), but we do not think he was, otherwise he would have been more accurate. He said the Jews would bind Paul and deliver him to the Gentiles. The event shows that it was the Gentiles who bound him, and the danger was lest they should deliver him to the Jews. The last thing the Jews were disposed to do was to deliver him to the Gentiles. They wanted to deal with him themselves. Prophecies inspired by the Holy Spirit are not so inaccurate in details.

101. What Authority Is There for the Belief That Peter Died in Rome?

It is held as a settled point, by the oldest writers, that Peter went to Rome in the last year of his life. The statements of Eusebius and Jerome that the apostle remained many years in Rome do not seem to rest upon accurate information. But concerning his actual visit there, there is no room for doubt. Clement of Rome, writing before the close of the first century, mentions it. Ignatius, in an epistle to the Romans, refers to Peter in terms that show his special personal connection with their church. Papias also refers to Peter's Roman experience, and Dionysius of Corinth, writing to Soter, Bishop of Rome, in the second century, explains the intimate relations between the two churches by the fact that Peter and Paul both taught in Italy and both suffered martyrdom there. Irenæus bears distinct testimony to Peter's presence in Rome. Caius, the Roman presbyter, in the next century, also gives similar testimony and speaks of Peter's tomb in the Vatican. Besides, there is the additional evidence of Origen, Tertullian and the ante- and post-Nicene fathers as to Peter's presence in Rome. None of those authorities mentioned, however, assert that he was the sole founder and head of the church, as the Romish clergy contend. As to Peter's martyrdom, we may cite Origen, who declares that the apostle himself chose crucifixion. St. Ambrose and Tillemont also give corroborative testimony.

102. When Was Peter Converted?

We have no record of the period in Peter's life when the change took place. It may have been when he left

all to follow Christ. His doing so was stronger evidence of conversion than some converts now would give. Or it may have been when he confessed Christ and was commended for it (Matt. 16:17). In the passage which has probably prompted the question (Luke 22:32) the word is better translated "restored" or "turned again" than "converted."

103. Why Is It that the Abyssinian Church Proclaims Pontius Pilate a Saint?

Many strange legends concerning Pilate have been preserved. Concerning these one commentator writes: "The disposition to represent Pilate as himself becoming a Christian explains, perhaps, the belief of the Coptic Church that he died a saint and a martyr." His wife, Claudia Procula, according to the tradition, had already become a convert to the new faith, and on that account she is honored as a saint by the Greek Church. Some of the early Christians seem to have identified her with the Claudia of II Tim. 4:21; but this is by no means definite. Tertullian wrote that Pilate, "at or immediately after Christ's death on the cross, was already a Christian in his own convictions." The Copts have canonized both Pilate and his wife and honor them on the same day, June 25. The Abuna or patriarch of the Abyssinian Church receives his investiture from the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria, who is the nominal head of the Ethiopian Church. The Abyssinians have no doubt adopted their notion of Pilate's canonicity from this source. Jesus' estimate of Pilate, however, as recorded in John 19:11, is the verdict of history. The governor was a worldly man, weak and ambitious and unsupported

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by moral principle, who made a great crime possible by his feebleness of character.

104. Who Was Pilate's Wife?

Pilate's wife, she who had "suffered many things in a dream," and hence sought to prevent the execution of Jesus, was, according to tradition, a proselyte, named Claudia Procula. Though nothing is known of her origin, the tradition as to her becoming a Christian is as old as the time of Origen. The Greek Church has canonized her. Her dream has been interpreted by some as a divine interposition, and by others as a suggestion of the devil, who wished to prevent the Saviour's death, and by still others as the unconscious reflection of her interest in the reports which had reached her regarding Jesus.

105. Was Salome a Sister of Mary, the Mother of Jesus?

She was apparently the wife of Zebedee (compare Matt. 27:56 with Mark 15:40). Some modern critics hold that she was that sister of Mary the mother of Jesus to whom reference is made in John 19:25, while others believe the passage refers to Mary, the wife of Cleophas, who is mentioned immediately afterward. This passage has been the subject of much dispute among Bible commentators.

106. Why Did the Samaritans Reject Jesus as Their Messiah?

The fact that Jesus had set his face toward Jerusalem (Luke 9:53) led the Samaritans to reject him

as Messiah, because they had been taught that their Messiah would come to Mount Gerizim (compare John 4:20, 21). The Samaritans still consider Mount Gerizim the most sacred place in the world.

107. Who Was Theophilus?

He is referred to in Luke chap. 1 and Acts chap. 1, and is variously regarded by commentators, some holding that it was a name applicable to every lover of truth. Thus, Origen, Salvianus, Epiphanius and others held that all who are beloved of God are "Theophil." Others assert that he was an actual person in high official position, some contending that he was a Roman governor or senator at Antioch or Achaia, with whom Luke was intimately acquainted and whom he had baptized. It is obvious that he was a Christian. Another view is that he was addressed by Luke as the head of the Jewish nation. Later commentators reject the impersonal view and hold that Theophilus was a native of Italy, probably a convert of Luke or Paul, to whom the former dedicated his beautiful Gospel history. He lived about 56 A. D.

108. Who Was Titus, to Whom Paul Addressed One of His Epistles?

Titus was of Greek origin and was thought to be a native of Antioch. Paul after converting him called him his own son. This is all that is known of the early history of Titus. Some writers have endeavored to identify him with Timothy, but the evidence all goes to show that they were two distinct individuals.

109. Why Is There Not a Gift of Tongues at the Present Time?

The "Gift of Tongues" at Pentecost was given because of an urgent need. It was speaking not in unknown tongues, but in the current languages represented in that great throng of different nationalities. There was no confusion, no misunderstanding, no Babel of uncouth or unintelligible sounds. It was the method chosen by the Holy Spirit to bring into the Gospel fold the strangers from other lands who were soon to depart. That the gift may still be bestowed in modern times is not questioned; but that it has been bestowed in some instances where emotional and uninstructed persons are concerned is questionable. We should "try the spirits" to see whether they be of God or otherwise. He is not the author of confusion and he gives no message to his children that is wholly lost through being unintelligible.

Because of the gift of tongues, we have no doubt that in the days of Paul there was a great deal of trouble in the church on that account and many conflicting opinions. All the spirits are not of God, and it is well to try them, as the Bible suggests. Writing of tongues, Paul says distinctly in I Cor. 14 chapter: "Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speaketh in a tongue, let it be by two or at the most three, and that in turn; and let one interpret: but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church, and let him speak to himself and to God." In other words, any message claiming to be in a tongue, yet which could neither be understood nor interpreted, was, in Paul's view, unfitted for delivery in the church or in public at all. God is just as able to

bestow the gift of tongues to-day as he was at Pentecost; but we want to be sure that it is the divine gift and not a counterfeit, sent to delude and mislead.

110. Who Was Veronica?

Veronica was a pious woman of Jerusalem, the story of whose kindness to the Saviour when he was being taken to crucifixion has been preserved in tradition. She is not mentioned by name in the Gospels. She is supposed to have been the woman mentioned in Matt. 9. 20.

111. Were There Degrees of Importance Among the Apostles?

Matt. 18:18 grants to all of the apostles the same power with regard to admission to and rejection from the membership of the church, which had already been given to Peter, so that all were equally recognized and equipped with the same authority. The apostles were never empowered, as the Roman Church claims, to personally forgive, but simply to declare God's will and readiness to pardon the repentant sinner.

(See Question No. 83.)

112. Why Did Paul After His Conversion Go Into the Temple to Purify Himself?

Paul's action in going into the Temple and purifying himself with the Jews (Acts 21:26) was a conciliation to Jewish prejudice. To the Jews he became as a Jew that he might gain them to Christ.

113. What Kind of Death Did Herodias and Her Daughter Die?

Josephus in *Antiquities*, Book 18, chapter 5, refers to the closing career of Herodias. She went with Antipas to Lugdunum and there shared his exile and reverses until death ended them.

CHRISTIAN LIVING

114. Is It Right to Purchase Prize Packages or to Set Aside Articles to Be Won by the Greatest Number of Votes at Church Fairs?

Prize packages, as popularly understood, are a lottery, wherein the value and sometimes even the character of the contents are unknown. They are a species of gambling, and an imposition upon credulous people. Better select what you want, buy it in the regular way, and leave all games of chance alone. The more you are acquainted with such games the poorer you will become. There are many counterfeit methods of giving and they cultivate bogus benevolence. All methods of raising money for the Lord that are contrary to the precepts and examples of his Word are to be condemned. The simple method of free-will offerings alone is approved (see Ex. 35: 5, 21, 29; II Cor. chaps. 8 and 9; Matt. 10:8). Lottery and grab-bag and similar devices involving the gambling principle are all "works of the flesh" and a distinct desecration of the Lord's house.

115. What Attitude Should a Christian Take on the Subject of Dancing?

In the great discussion which is now agitating our churches, as to "letting down the bars" on the question of amusements, dancing occupies a prominent

place. There are, doubtless, many good, well-meaning people who, never having fully considered the subject, are disposed to be tolerant regarding the dance, and do not sympathize with the strenuous opposition that is displayed toward it by many in and out of the pulpit. We think, however, that the attitude of the earnest Christian toward dancing should be the same as that toward cards—no compromise. A thing is either right or it is wrong, and even in its least objectionable aspect dancing is a physical dissipation, a waste of time, an invitation to doubtful promiscuous acquaintanceship, and an association which is difficult to describe as other than immodest. "Dancing," says an authority, "breaks down the bounds of modesty." Late hours, crowded rooms, unnatural excitement, and peril of colds from exposure are among the other objections which any sensible person might urge. In the Christian it is enough to know that the ball-room has been the first step to ruin for countless multitudes. It has never helped one soul, and has destroyed many. These considerations should make the earnest inquirer shun such follies and avoid even the appearance of evil. Though he himself might not fall, his example might be the means of leading weaker souls to destruction.

On the other hand, no one has ever heard of a single instance where dancing could be regarded as morally helpful. On the general principle that any amusement which is in the nature of a stumbling-block to spiritual growth should be avoided, the Christian would do well to omit dancing altogether from the list of innocent recreations. Any father who wishes his daughter well does not wish her to be subjected

to the promiscuous acquaintanceships, the doubtful companionships of the ballroom, where she must inevitably meet persons at times who would never be considered fit to be invited to her home. If you desire to keep your children pure and honorable, keep them from evil associates, who are common in every dancing and card-playing community.

116. Is It Wrong to Play Chess, Dominoes and Authors?

The whole question of amusements must be relegated to the individual conscience. "To him that thinketh it is sin, it is sin." There are some men whose idea of duty and the necessity for devoting all the time available to work for God is so exalted that they would consider any amusement a sinful waste of time, and such men are to be admired. There are others, however, who find in relaxation a means of increasing their power for labor. They wisely take relaxation in some form. Certain games have by association with gambling become disreputable and these for example's sake should be eschewed. Cards, roulette and many that might be cited belong to the category. The games mentioned in the question cannot strictly be called games of chance and it would be uncharitable to condemn as inconsistent those who engage in them for relaxation.

117. What Is the Correct Attitude of the Church on the Moving Picture Question?

The church is just beginning to realize that moving pictures can be made one of the most valuable of its accessories. This new art, which has unquestionably

come to stay, is capable of being adapted to the teaching of the grandest lessons of history, sacred and secular. Protected from moral blemishes, it will prove one of the church's most powerful coadjutors in reaching the multitudes for good. It lends itself admirably to the uses of instruction and inspiration. Labor, travel, exploration, science, history are all within its reach. It can be made tributary to religion and good citizenship and to instruction in all that relates to the progress and betterment of the race. We believe the time will come, and soon, when our churches, schools and lyceums will employ the new art as one of the main adjuncts of their work, which will simplify and greatly add to its value and efficiency.

118. Is It Right for a Ladies' Aid Society to Give Entertainments in the Church and Employ Professional Talent?

Many churches adhere to what seems to be the only Scripturally sanctioned method of raising money for church purposes, namely, that of direct, voluntary giving. Gradually, however, the idea that certain church societies may legitimately "earn" money by arranging some social event or entertainment has gained ground, and in some cases it does not seem to hinder spiritual work. Then, too, the idea is growing that it is the duty of the church to meet and direct not only the spiritual but also the intellectual and social needs of the people. Lectures may very appropriately have a place in the program of a church, and there seems to be no reason why the best vocal and instrumental music may not also be rendered. Many churches are making extensive use of the motion-picture machines for educa-

tional and wholesomely entertaining exhibitions. Some denominations still have a strong prejudice against using the church edifice or auditorium for anything but purely spiritual functions and use a second building or the church basement for these other affairs. Others feel that God's house is also, by his choice, the people's house and that anything which ministers to the physical, mental, moral or spiritual welfare of the people may be given in it.

119. Can a Christian Conscientiously Play Cards?

A Christian cannot conscientiously play cards, because even looking at the matter simply for his own sake cards are the common instruments of gambling; because by its very nature card-playing excites the gambling propensity, and is therefore most dangerous to morality. For the sake of others to whom his example may give scandal, and who might be led by that example to their ruin, a Christian should avoid cards, for by their use, even innocently, he might become responsible for a brother's destruction. Card-playing has been the first step to ruin of countless multitudes.

The true Christian will do nothing whereby he may place a stumbling-block in the way of another. While the mere act of card-playing may in itself be innocent enough, it is a practise which has proved the first step to ruin to countless multitudes. On the other hand, man's moral, spiritual or mental character has never been improved in the slightest degree by card-playing. It is not an accomplishment that wins for a man esteem and confidence either in business or in private life, but the reverse. For the professed follower of Christ to

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attempt to justify this dangerous and evil pastime is an incomprehensible inconsistency (see Rom. 14:15-21). Apply the fixed principle that "it is good not to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth," and you will never touch another card, lest by example you may lead weaker ones into sin and possibly be the means of their spiritual destruction.

120. Is It Right for a Christian to Attend Social Gatherings?

A Christian is supposed to be a light in the world, and therefore he should not exclude himself from the world. He must make it a matter of conscience how far he can share in social amusements without violating his principles. There are many amusements that are innocent. Even Jesus attended a wedding feast.

121. In Order to Live Up to Christ's Teachings, Is It Necessary that We Give Up Everything Which Furnishes an Occasion for Sinful Thoughts or Emotions?

The texts Matt. 5:29-30 and Mark 9:43, 47, "If thy right eye offend thee pluck it out," etc., etc., may seem at first blush to mean more than they really do. Suppose, now, we start all over again, remembering that when one wants to do right Jesus is his friend, not his enemy. Suppose now that one, for example, has a good voice or some other accomplishment which may lead to foolish pride or vanity. Or if vanity is aroused by something which is not a talent but a natural gift, like beautiful hair. Should we give up our accomplishment and cut off our beautiful hair? Are

we quite sure of the kindness of Jesus? Remember that everything Jesus ever said he said to help people, to help them to happiness. Now we seem to be missing happiness, and Christ comes along to help us. If you will stop to reason, to let your fundamental common sense, your God-given faculty of thought, do its appointed work, you will know perfectly well that Jesus does not want you to do any of the frightful or uncomfortable things suggested above. In the words quoted here he was making a point, was stating a principle. He was saying that eternal life and happiness are of incomparably greater importance than earthly life and happiness. We must stand ready to give up anything at the command of God; our only complete happiness is in complete surrender to him. But Jesus loved beautiful children and sweet music and fragrant flowers; he believed in friendship and sociability and human gladness. He wants his friends to be beautiful and winsome and happy. Even the austere Paul spoke of woman's hair as her "glory." Your trouble is that you are doubting Christ instead of trusting him, fearing him instead of loving him. Tell him at once that you will obey him in everything that he makes *unmistakably clear*.

One would do very wrong to make any great sacrifice on a guess. When he speaks his message is plain: "My sheep know my voice," he said. Every gift and power and grace God has given you can be used in making others happy and in glorifying Christ. Ask him to cleanse your heart from all sin, to fill it with love for himself and others, to help you forget yourself in loving and serving him. Then your life will be full of gladness and beauty and usefulness, and you

will wonder that you could ever have been afraid of so kind a Saviour, who wants to make us all glad.

122. Can a Christian Conscientiously Attend Theatrical Performances?

The Christian is one who has the Christ spirit, who is trusting in him, seeking to be like him and to know and do his will. We cannot understand how such a one can find pleasure in theatergoing and should expect that his thoughts and feelings would lead him to very different places for enjoyment. But that is a matter for his own conscience. It is not for you, or us, or any church, to say that he will be excluded from heaven for any such cause.

You must consider the effect on yourself, and the effect on others, of your going. Even if you are not injured yourself, your example may be injurious. There are many kinds of theaters, but your friends may not discriminate. A person who goes to see a vicious play may quote your example in defense of himself, because he, like you, went to a theater, though you may detest the nastiness of such plays as he delights in, and you may go only to pure and elevating performances. As to the effect on yourself, you must judge. We think if the love of Christ and his divine life are in your soul, you will not care to go to the theater. You will be so much in earnest in seeking growth in grace that you will not have patience to watch a theatrical performance. You will have no disposition to spend in that way time that may be used in Christ's service.

123. Is It Right for Church Societies to Have Suppers and Picnics?

We devoutly wish that those stern Christians who insist that certain detail acts of conduct are wrong and certain others right would study carefully and prayerfully St. Paul's words about judging and about liberty (Rom. 14; I Cor. 8; I Cor. 10: 19-33). The very heart of the Christian system and the new dispensation is that people, after having love for God and love for their neighbor implanted in their souls, are *free*; free to use their sanctified judgment in all matters of conduct not definitely prescribed by the moral law. If a church society wishes to go to the labor of arranging a supper and takes the proceeds for the church, no one should find fault, though it is true, on the other hand, that if all the members of the church contributed as much as they should, these functions would not be necessary. As to picnics, what possible objection could any one have to the children of a Sunday school getting together with their parents and teachers for a pleasant day in the woods or by the lake shore or the sea?

124. Do Angels Visit People and Talk to Them as They Did in Ancient Times?

The reference to angels in Heb. 1: 14 implies that God still employs them to minister to his children. Our not seeing them does not prove that they are not around us. Elisha's servant was at first unaware of their presence though the mountain was full of them (II Kings 6: 17). In the Christian dispensation, however, the Holy Spirit is the recognized channel of com-

munication between God and man. Jesus said that he would be our guide into all truth (John 16:13) and he is to abide with us forever (John 14:16). The laws of God being unchangeable it would seem that there should be now as formerly visions, miracles and angelic appearances as of old.

In one sense, of course, God's laws are unchangeable; they are always wise, beneficent and righteous; but it does not follow that he always deals with men in the same way. There is an obvious growth in the development of his revelation of himself which you can trace in the Bible. Moses and Samuel and David and the prophets had not so clear an idea of him as we get in Jesus Christ. It is as with the education of a child. In his early years we teach him by pictures and stories, but as he grows older we leave all that behind. Christ was clearly hurt by the craving of the people to see miracles performed. Paul had but a low estimate of the value of the tongues (see I Cor. 14:19). God in our age is dealing with men in preaching and by the Holy Spirit. As Abraham said to Dives: "If men believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be convinced though one rose from the dead."

We are told that God is a spirit and he is therefore invisible to mortal eyes. All that we read of his revelations leads us to believe that he assumed a form for the purpose of communication with the Old Testament saints. That form they saw, but God himself they could never see. In the same way the very writers who declare that God could not be seen were well aware that they had seen him in Christ. In a very solemn manner Jesus told them that they who had seen him had seen the Father. Yet even in him the

glory of God was veiled by his flesh; but there was such a manifestation of his presence as a human being could bear to see and no more. The Old Testament writers doubtless believed that they saw God, but in the New Testament light it was realized that God could not be seen, being a spirit.

125. What Is Assurance? and Are We to Have It?

Various schools of theology differ about this doctrine of "assurance." Some saints and scholars are so impressed with the frailties and vagaries of the human mind that they cannot understand how a human being can be *sure* of certain things relating to the infinite and divine. Others, and this is, we think, the position held by most Protestant bodies, hold that faith will lead to assurance. "Know," "knowing," "knowledge" are favorite New Testament words. The apostles were absolutely sure that Christ had redeemed them and was their friend. Many other souls have had and many still possess this same experience. They know God has forgiven them just as they would know that a debt had been paid that they owe. They say with the once-blind man: "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind now I see." They know they used to dislike and distrust God; now they know they love and trust him. They began by believing his promises because others had found them true; now they believe them because they have found them true. Study II Tim. 1:12; I John 2:3; 3:14, 3:19, 4:13, 5:13, 5:19; Rom. 6:6, etc. Assurance is produced by faith, Eph. 3:12; made full by hope, Heb. 6:11, 19; and is confirmed by love, I John 3:14, 19. Saints

are privileged to have assurance of various things. Such as their election, Ps. 4:3; I Thess. 1:4; their redemption, Job 19:25; their adoption, Rom. 8:16; their salvation and eternal life, Isa. 12:2; I John 5:13. They are also sure of the unalienable love of God, Rom. 8:38, 39; of union with God and Christ, I. Cor. 6:15; Eph. 5:30; of peace with God by Christ, Rom. 5:1; of preservation, continuance in grace, comfort in affliction, support in death and a glorious resurrection, Ps. 3:6; Phil. 1:6; Ps. 73:26; Luke 4:19; Ps. 23:4; Job 19:26; Phi. 3:21. They should therefore give diligence to attain assurance and strive to maintain it (II Pet. 1:10, 11; Heb. 3:14, 18).

126. Is a Christian Bound to Strive Constantly After the Highest Possible Attainments?

The injunction of Paul, I Cor. 9:24, has been interpreted to mean that a Christian is bound to live, as it were, constantly living, in a constant strain.

There can be no doubt that a Christian must seek the highest spiritual attainments. But there are many misconceptions of what those highest attainments are. They certainly do not mean that a Christian should be under a "constant strain," if by that is meant a restless, anxious, troubled life. It is from precisely this kind of spiritual "strain" that Christ came to relieve us. A great Bible word is "rest." Christ came to substitute God's strength for our strength in spiritual efforts. "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says (4:10): "He that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from his." Whittier prays:

*"Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace."*

But as the soul enters into those higher places of rest and peace there will be still great activities in *service*. The best saints are those who are under the *strain* of a great, passionate desire to serve and help others. But such a life is delightfully "normal," and also usually "healthy." To be free from anxieties about self, and lost in service for others in the name of Jesus, that is the life not only of highest duty but of highest delight.

127. To What Extent Can a Saved and Sanctified Person Engage in a Mercantile or Speculative Business?

Such a person may engage in business to any extent, providing his spirit be that which Christ demanded and his conduct in accordance with Gospel principles. There never was a time when honesty in business was so vigorously demanded as now. At a great convention of advertising men recently held, the watchword adopted for future work was "Truth." The old method of misrepresentation is rapidly losing ground. And while competition is still recognized as one of the principles of business, yet the spirit of co-operation and service is rapidly gaining. A Christian merchant may compete with his rival, but his *motive* need not be to get the better of the other man, to defeat him, but to do his work well, to serve his customers faithfully and retain a fair profit for himself. It is in this matter of profit that the real trouble arises. People's eyes are open as never before to the injustice of many

of the present and time-honored standards of profit. They realize that capital has had too great a share and physical labor too little. This is the thing that must be adjusted, and the men of the church should be in the forefront of those making the adjustments, even at great sacrifice. Of course a Christian must not and cannot do a single dishonest thing. He must always represent his side of every bargain honestly, and demand only fair prices. As to speculative business, much of this so-called business is simply gambling. But bonds or stocks may be purchased outright, and the fair profits due to natural changes in legitimate business be retained. Each Christian must determine in his own conscience what it is right for him to do, but he should keep his conscience tender and his determination strong to do right. It is a matter for deep regret that some professing Christians appear to consider practises justifiable which many so-called worldly men would scorn to follow. The whole business world needs to be brought face to face with Christ's great ideal of sacrifice, service, co-operation and brotherhood.

128. Can a Christian Be Successful in Business When There Is Competition?

There is an ever-widening and ever-deepening conviction that some of the fundamental methods and principles of the business world are irreconcilable with the teachings of Christ. The motive of most work in the world of business is profit, or gain. The motive of Christ is service. For instance, the world says: "Let us make shoes so that we may get a profit by selling them." Christ would say: "Let us make shoes

because people need them and will suffer without them." Further, as business is at present organized, an unjust proportion of the gains of manufacture go to the owners of the manufacturing plants, many of whom may have no other connection with the business than the holding of stocks and bonds, rather than to the people who actually do the work of the industry. While Christians should try earnestly to reorganize the business world to bring it into conformity with Christ's laws of helpful service, they may individually adopt his spirit for their own and do their work with the motive of service rather than the motive of selfish gain.

129. Are Christians Expected to Wear Only the Poorest and Commonest Clothes?

We do not believe that the blessing of God would be withheld from one who wears decent clothes corresponding with the position occupied in society. The sin to be most earnestly avoided is pride in such things. No one has a right to dictate in such trivial matters as the quality of another's clothes. The Christian is a law unto himself. As he consecrates himself unto God he will be more and more disposed to curtail his expenditure on himself, that he may have the money to devote to religious and philanthropic work. But how far he shall carry this self-denial his conscience must decide.

130. What Influence Should a Christian Have on His Community?

By his upright and exemplary life, his helpfulness, his readiness to give counsel and aid to those who

need it, his generosity to the poor, and his practical faith, as shown by his works, he can exert a good influence on all with whom he comes in contact. He should never miss an opportunity to "let his light shine," so that men may know that he is a follower of Christ. He is a living evangel and by his influence and example attracts others to the source from which he himself draws courage and strength for the struggle of this life and assurance for the life to come.

131. If the Soul's Great Battle to Decide Its Eternal Destiny Must Be Fought Out in Solitude, How Are We to Regard the Conversions That Take Place in Times of Great Public Revivals?

We can no more assign bounds to the operations of the Holy Spirit than we can set limits to God's mercy. In many instances, no doubt, the public confession of Christ at a revival is the fruition of a silent struggle that may have been going on in seclusion. Paul, for example, had such a twofold experience. After Christ had been revealed to him on the road to Damascus, he went away in retirement to Arabia for a season. Conviction had come and actual conversion; but he needed the seclusion of the desert, that he might commune alone with God and readjust his future life to new spiritual conditions. Similarly, Moses, after his call from the burning bush, sought the desert for communion. So the convert in modern days finds seclusion with God the only satisfying way to get his new spiritual bearings. There is always a part—generally the principal part—of the great battle which must be

fought out alone. In our deepest troubles, we seek the seclusion of our closet; and there, where no human eye can penetrate, we make the fight and God gives the victory. We cannot gauge the operations of the Holy Spirit by human rules; it goeth where it is sent. Whether it be in the church gathering or on the street, in the railroad car or in the privacy of our own home, the shaft of conviction finds us wherever we may be. It may happen that this has been preceded by a long and arduous struggle, or the soul's ordeal may follow it. Hence we have no right to assume that conversions in revivals are not the legitimate work of the Spirit. Often the seeker, though he may be surrounded by others, is really in spirit alone with God. The world itself may know nothing of the beginning of the struggle, or whether it is still going on. Besides, individual experiences vary. Some come easily through the struggle, while others undergo a longer siege. This may be largely due to temperament or other reasons; but in all cases it may be safely averred there comes a time of crisis, when the soul seeks solitude with God, and it is then that it receives its largest measure of strength and assurance. The great thing in revival experience is the reaching of the turning-point, when the soul makes its decision. This, while it may be the work of an instant, is deepened and strengthened by opportunities for spiritual retirement afterward. We cannot go to the desert, but many good Christian people choose opportunities for seclusion at regular seasons, from which they emerge with deepened and strengthened faith and better equipped for leading helpful and spiritual lives.

132. What Part Should Reason, Authority, Experience, Instinct, Common Sense and Advice of Friends Play as Guide in Matters of Christian Conduct?

Common sense and reason may be considered fundamental, because if a person is unbalanced mentally he is unable to receive correctly the messages from the Bible, the Holy Spirit, or friends. This is why it is so necessary that people who are eager to obey the Master literally and to please him in all things must take care that their brains and nerves are kept normal and strong. Many people who are greatly distressed over some spiritual problem need first of all a wise physician and careful treatment for their bodies before they are in a condition to consider them seriously. It is to such that Jesus would say: "Come ye yourselves apart unto a desert place, and rest a while." Common sense, reason and instinct make a basis; experience and custom help; advice of friends, particularly Christian friends, is important. Authority is, for the Protestant, probably least important of all, for the very principle of Protestantism is that each soul deals directly and freely with God. A safe rule is to get our guidance from three main sources, and defer action until those three agree—the Bible, the voice of the Spirit (or conscience) and the counsel of our closest spiritual companions. The Bible must be interpreted to us by the Holy Spirit, and it is part of the plan of God that we should receive help from our companions in Christ in prayer and counsel. Above all, in deciding on matters of conduct we must remember that Christ wishes to be our Friend rather than our

Master; that he wants our love. The motive in every decision ought to be a desire to please him and to help others. Often a problem which is very difficult when approached from the standpoint of self becomes easy when we remember that it is he who must be pleased, and others, not ourselves, who must be helped and made glad.

133. How Will a Christian Conduct Himself?

A true Christian will endeavor to live and act in accordance with Christian principles. He will do nothing that "may cause his brother to stumble or offend"; he will avoid even "the appearance of evil"; he will not stifle the voice of conscience or compromise with sin; he will cultivate temperance in his own person and will help others to do likewise. He will engage in no business that involves the impoverishment or moral or physical degradation of his brother man.

134. Can One Be a True Christian and Disciple of Christ Who Has Never Joined a Church?

It may be said, in general terms, that for one to claim to be a follower of Christ and yet to stand aloof from association with his church and decline to take any part in its activities is a strange and seemingly irreconcilable attitude. There are some church bodies that hold it absolutely essential to Christianity that one hear the Word wherever it is possible to do so. If we really belong to the Lord's army we should fight in line with our fellow soldiers in our own proper place in the ranks and under the flag so that

all the world may know where we stand. Not once but many times do the Scriptures emphasize the duty of assembling ourselves together, of living up to our privileges as God's people before the whole world, of meeting for prayer, praise and worship, and of working in harmonious relationship with the church in all that tends to advance Christ's kingdom on earth. One who misses these privileges and all the spiritual satisfaction and the social and moral uplift that come from their exercise misses much of the joy of Christian living. There are people, indeed many of them, who, however much they may exalt the spiritual mission of the church in their minds, make little or no effort to have a share in its work. They overlook the great fact that the church of Christ is the divinely ordained agent for the extension of his kingdom. And having no personal part in its work, they miss the great blessing of being among those of whom it was said by Daniel: "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."

135. May One Refuse to Go to Church Because There Are Those in It Who Do Not Live Right?

If this theory had been correct Peter and John would have left the group of apostles because Judas was a member of the group. They were there not for the sake of associating with Judas, but for the sake of associating with Jesus. They could get the benefit of the words of Jesus; they could receive the power of his presence for their own spiritual needs and for the work they had to do; they could help him in his work and help other people, as they went about with

him and for him; they could derive help from the characters and experiences of the faithful disciples. Judas could not hinder or lessen any of these things by his own unfaithfulness. Now your problem is precisely the same. You can find Jesus in your church; you can worship him and enjoy his friendship there; you can help others and by your faithfulness and earnestness can help him. By standing for all that is right and noble and pure; by being firm in declaring that those who are not true should not be advanced to positions of responsibility; by trying in every way to be like Christ and to help others to be like him you can serve and honor him in any church. Paul's statement in I Cor. 5: 11 certainly does not mean that good members should leave the church rather than keep company with evil members, but that they should not countenance their evil deeds by personal, social intimacy.

136. Should a Church Change as the People Change to Keep Along with the Times?

In some respects a church must change as the times change. For instance, its members change their mode of dress with the changing centuries; they change their language, as new countries are discovered and the races mingle and develop. The Roman Catholic Church has made a great mistake in clinging to a dead language for so much of its ritual. (Paul made clear the advantage of talking in a language the people understood. I Cor. 14: 6-11, 19, 27, 28.) The essential truths and principles of Christianity do not change, but the church must adapt itself, so far as it can without violating any of its changeless principles, to the changing conditions of civilization in order that it may

win the greatest possible number to the fold of Christ. The apostles walked; Wesley rode horseback. If they were alive to-day they would use trains. We light our churches by electricity, not with candles or crude lamps. We use the newspapers to advertise our services, spreading thus the Gospel invitation. As better musical instruments are manufactured the church uses them for its work. All the modern helps in Sunday school work and church life can be made a means of grace if the old power of the truth is not surrendered. It is pitiful to see a church trusting to these new appliances and methods for results when it has lost the glow and power of God's Spirit, but a Spirit-filled church can make use of these things to forward the progress of the "everlasting Gospel." Paul said: "I am become all things to all men that I might by all means save some" (I Cor. 9:19-22).

137. What Is "Worldly Dress"?

The wearing of ornaments seems to be forbidden in I Pet. 3:3. Let us bring this problem back to our never-failing test of love. Suppose some one whom you greatly loved were in need of food, or were lost, or in great distress which a message from you would relieve. You would make any sacrifice to send the food or the message, or to find the wanderer. This is the Christian's attitude toward life. He loves those for whom his Saviour died, and will make any sacrifice to serve them. But there are nearer circles of friends and more immediate duties of home and community life, and in these we must bear our part happily and helpfully. We have a right to look, or try to look attractive, and to please those who are near us.

A Christian cannot, must not be extravagant, but he may dress correctly and tastefully. There is no sin in the wearing of ornaments as such; the only sin can be in placing one's thought on these rather than on spiritual things and in using money needlessly which could be spent in service for others. A Christian woman's dress does not need to be ugly; it simply should not be extravagant. Peter, in the passage mentioned, links the wearing of gold with braiding hair and putting on apparel. He does not mean that any of the three is wrong, but that the *thought* and *care* must be on inner rather than outward things. As for gifts of gold, many of these, such as wedding rings, for instance, are a precious part of the inner life itself, and their possession is a constant help in one's work. Do not get under bondage. The Christian is free to follow his own conscience in these matters. God wants us to be happy, beautiful and free. But all the time there will be at our hearts the tug of our brothers and sisters and the little ones who are in distress, and we will do what we can to save and help and cheer them.

138. Is Public Confession Necessary to Forgiveness by God?

We do not think it is required of you. If you have wronged any one and can make restitution you ought to confess your sin to the person wronged and make restitution, but there is no need of public confession. We can easily conceive of offenses in which confession would make greater trouble and do positive harm. If you have made your peace with God your own conscience must guide you as to further steps. Unless

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it is a wrong which can be rectified, or its consequences alleviated by confession, we do not think you are required to make confession.

139. Can One's Conscience Be Taken as an Infallible Guide to Right Living?

Not in its natural state, because it may be misled. A man may do wrong, as Paul did, when he persecuted the church, with a conscientious belief that he is doing right. The conscience needs to be informed and enlightened. The converted man often discovers that habits and practises which his conscience approved before his conversion it condemns afterward when it has been quickened and educated by the Holy Spirit. Light and knowledge are necessary in order that the conscience may do its duty efficiently.

140. How Can We Consecrate Our Heart and Life to the Lord?

The question of consecration is one that frequently arises, yet when we stop to analyze it, it seems strange that there should be any difficulty about it. If you possess anything which you wish to give to another, you simply give it to him; it is just as simple as that to give your whole heart and life to God. We already belong to him absolutely; in consecration we are only returning what is his. The question how we can take ourselves out of God's hands should really be more difficult than the question how we may submit ourselves to him. Remember that God is always reasonable, always kind. Many of the things sometimes suggested to our minds when the subject of consecration is brought up are not the suggestion of the Holy

Spirit, but of our own minds, or of disturbing spirits. There is no uncertainty about the voice of God. He only asks us to obey him when he makes duty clear, and has promised to give us grace and power always for the duties he gently lays upon us. There surely should be no unwillingness to submit our lives to him; he can care for them and direct them much better than we. Consecration becomes easy when we approach the cross of Christ. We realize there that he gave himself for us because we were sinners—because of this very unwillingness in our hearts to surrender ourselves to him. Knowing this it is not hard to commit ourselves absolutely to his love, trusting him to forgive our sins, to cleanse our hearts, to guide and to keep us.

141. Can There Be Such a Thing as Unconscious Conversion?

There are doubtless many excellent Christian people who, having been brought up in Christian homes, were so thoroughly surrounded by religious influences in their childhood that they might be said to have been believers all their lives. This is the result of ideal Christian training. Such persons might have no remembrance of any time when they were not believers, and they might have no impression of any special change, although conscious of steady growth and progress in the spiritual life. Even in such cases, however, there must come a time when fuller realization begins through regeneration by the power of the Holy Spirit, who preaches true repentance and by faith works conversion. Then the desire for more thorough consecration and larger or more definite service makes itself

felt, and such a period marks the true spiritual awakening and new birth.

142. How Can We Get Relief Out of Spiritual Darkness?

The only way out of any form of spiritual darkness is a firm faith in Christ. Spiritual darkness always means that in some way or other we are doubting him. We are often tempted to think that something else is necessary to be done before we begin to trust him, some sacrifice to make, some duty to perform, some problem to be solved. But these things come after faith, not before it. Of course if some positive wrong has been committed this wrong must be righted before we can believe that Christ fully saves us. But where no such positive wrong has been done and no clear duty neglected, the first and indeed the only requirement is to trust in Christ. You will be tempted to turn away from this advice because you have heard it so often; but any other advice would be false. "Christ died for the ungodly." There is our only place of peace and light. When you believe that he died for you, that he died to make possible the forgiveness of your sins and the cleansing of your heart, when you believe that because he died your sins are forgiven and your heart is cleansed, you will have peace, and you will find the Saviour near you, with his light and comfort and power. After all, it is no wonder that we feel sad while we are doubting him. You would feel sad if you were doubting your friend, your brother, your parent. And remember that he, too, is saddened by our doubt. Read again some of the rich promises of God's Word, and refuse any longer to doubt that

they were written to you as well as to any other of his children: Isa. 55; Ezek. 36:25-27; Matt. 5:8, 10; Matt. 7:7-11; John 7:38, 39; John 8:36; Acts 2:1-4, 16-21, 39; Rom. 6; Rom. 8; II Cor. 7:1; Gal. 3; Eph. 3:14-21; Col. 3; I Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:9-11; 7:25; 9:11-14; Heb. 10:1-22, 35; Heb. 11; I John 3:1-9, 22; I John 5:4; Jude 24:25.

143. How Can We Get a Stronger Will Power to Resist Evil?

“How can I acquire a stronger will power?” Now the Bible promises all have a different emphasis. What God wants is that we should not count upon any power in ourselves, but rely altogether upon his power. So long as we are trusting in any power of our own we shall fail; but while we are trusting in his power we do not fail. Notice the wording of this typical promise, Ezek. 36:25-27 (see how God wants to substitute his great self, his “I,” for our sinful, weak and failing self): “Then will *I* sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. From all your filthiness, and all your idols will *I* cleanse you. A new heart also will *I* give you, and a new spirit will *I* put within you; and *I* will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and *I* will give you a heart of flesh. And *I* will put my Spirit within you, and *cause* you to walk in my statutes and ye *shall* keep my judgments and do them.” The secret of being kept is to let God keep us. At the time you realize your weakness most keenly, then is the time God will give his power most abundantly. Paul says: “When I am weak then am I strong” (II. Cor. 12:10). We wonder, and struggle, and fret, and try to find some new way, when, after all, there is only one

way. "Trusting Jesus—that is ALL!" Avoid being introspective. Take it for granted God is going to keep you; put all your dependence upon him; then plunge ahead and try to forget all about yourself in service for others.

144. Is It Ever Right to Pray for Deliverance from Evil by Death?

Many sufferers pray that death might come to relieve them of their sufferings and ask their friends to help them in such prayer. It is not right to do so because it is probably true that no human intelligence can be absolutely certain that any individual case is absolutely hopeless, except, perhaps, in cases of terrible wounds in which vital organs have been destroyed or large portions of human tissue detached. But in cases of sickness, no matter how severe, the old saying is generally true: "While there is life there is hope." Medical and surgical sciences now accomplish feats which would have been considered miracles a few years ago. And beyond the powers of these miracles of science are the miracles of God, which he is still willing to perform. It is right to pray for relief from pain, and for deliverance from death. But it would not seem right, except in most extremely rare cases, to pray for death itself. Those last days or hours of life might bring the richest soul experience of the years and might, indeed, be necessary to put the finishing touch upon God's preparation of the soul for heaven. If the trouble is other than physical, if it involves the conduct of friends, or financial difficulties, it is still easier to see how God might find ways of relieving the distress. Hearts are changed and blessings

received in most undreamed-of ways in response to fervent prayer. These friends would do well to ask, not for death, but for God's "very best" for them and theirs, and particularly that, before death comes, they be made absolutely and jubilantly submissive to his will. This will make their entrance to heaven more glorious, and all eternity for them more glad.

145. Is It Right to Have a Shrinking from Thoughts of Death?

Many feel a strange shrinking from death. You must not chide yourself too severely for this, for it is something experienced by many good people. A man may be truly brave yet have a shrinking from pain. He goes straight ahead toward the pain without the slightest thought of wavering, yet dreads the pain that waits him. Then, too, many shrink from the mystery of death. But there should be no real fear. Christ can and will save us from that. He conquered sin, which gives death its sting; and he went through death and the grave triumphantly, and promises to be with each of us when our time comes to die. As a matter of fact, however, there is apparently much less distress connected with the experience of death than people generally think. Nature usually provides a physical soothing and partial stupor which make the passing easy. When to this kindness of nature is added the infinite grace of Jesus, who takes us by the hand to lead us into the new home, there should be no apprehension at all. The deathbed of many believers has been truly glorious. In these cases there was no numbness of nature, but a keenness of intellect which seems to pierce the veil and observe the realities

of the spirit world. It should be our chief concern now to let God cleanse our hearts from all sin and to bring us unto a rich experience of his love. With this blessing and this companionship we may face death triumphantly and, both now and when our hour comes, shout with Paul: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

146. How Can We Attain the Consciousness of Being a Child of God?

Our spiritual problems are made simpler if we stick close to the question of sin. (Happiness or unhappiness, success or failure, safety or danger, all relate back to the fundamental problem of sin.) When any soul is in distress it should force itself back to a plain and emphatic settlement of the sin question. Now, are your sins forgiven or are they not? You have asked God to forgive you; what does he say? Your fears say he has not forgiven you; Satan says he has not; unbelief says he has not. But God himself says he has. Christ is saying to you, as he said to those who sought help from him long ago: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Are you going to trust all these false voices and refuse to believe him? Would he deceive you? Take him at his word. You will feel instantly the peace of forgiveness in your heart. The promises of cleansing from sin are just as emphatic. "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." Now, as you take God at his word in these matters of forgiving and cleansing, you will find yourself rejoicing. His presence will be a reality. You will know he is

your Saviour and your Friend. Future clouds will be dispelled by that heroic determination to trust his word about saving you from sin. Then, as you grow more and more busy in telling others about your gladness and leading them to trust him too, the light will grow brighter and brighter, your faith stronger, your strength for service greater. Don't worry about whether you have done right to stay in the church. You are in it. Now make yourself a strong, efficient, faithful member by believing that the name of Jesus really means that "he shall save his people from their sins."

147. Is Alliance and Society with the Enemies of God Desirable for Christians?

No, it is not, for it is forbidden and provokes the anger of God (Ex. 23:32; Josh. 23:6-7; II Cor. 6:14-17; Eph. 5:11; Deu. 7:4; II Chron. 19:21; Isa. 2:6). It also provokes God to leave men to reap the fruits of them (Josh. 23:12; Judg. 2:1-3). Such associations are ensnaring, enslaving, defiling, degrading and ruinous to spiritual and moral interests (Ex. 23:33; II Pet. 2:18, 19; Ezek. 9:1, 2; Isa. 1:23; Prov. 29:14; I Cor. 15:33). They are a proof of folly, have evil consequences and are a sin to be confessed, deeply repented of and forsaken, and as they involve saints in their guiltiness and punishment and being unbecoming to saints, they should shun all inducements thereto (Prov. 12:11; Jer. 51:7; Ezek. 10th chap.; II John 9-11; Jer. 51:6; II Chron. 19:2; Prov. 1:10; II Pet. 3:17). The Bible exhorts us to shun all inducements to such associations, to hate and avoid them, calls us to come out of them and shows us the means

of preservation from them (Prov. 1:10; II Pet. 3:17; Rom. 16:17; I Cor. 5:9; Num. 16:26; Jer. 51:6, 43; II Cor. 6:17; Prov. 2:10). There is great blessedness in avoiding and forsaking them, therefore saints grieve to witness such associations in their brethren, pious parents prohibit them to their children and persons in authority should denounce them. The evil of such associations is exemplified in Solomon (I Kings 11:1-8), Rehoboam (I Kings 12:8, 9), the Israelites (Ezek. 9:1-21), Judas Iscariot (Matt. 26:14-16). Let these and many others we know of be a solemn warning to us.

148. How Can We Overcome Envy and Unkindness?

You need to pray to be strengthened in temptation, and to be given power to overcome those feelings. Envy and unkindness and worldliness are loath to loose their hold on the heart, but they will go if you ask for divine help in repelling them. We would advise you to connect yourself with some form of Christian work, either in the church organization or out of it. Visit the poor and the sick and do what you can to help them. Contrast your lot with theirs. Count your blessings and share them with others. You will find happiness and spiritual help in such a course. No matter how little you can do, do it gladly and with a joyful spirit. Do not allow yourself to mope and bemoan your own condition and shortcomings. Leave it all in God's hands, "who knoweth all our infirmities." Hold fast to the great fact that Jesus "saves to the uttermost" and that means *you*, since you have accepted him. Confess him before men

and go on in his service and the blessing will not fail to come. Forget yourself and he will take care of you, as he has promised.

149. How Did Fasting Come to Be a Common Religious Custom so That Even Our Lord Gives Rules as to It?

In Matt 6:16 we read: "Moreover when ye fast be not as the hypocrites of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast." Moses made no regulations in relation to fasting, and the custom does not appear to have been known before his time. In Judg. 20:26 we find the earliest Bible reference to fasting, and from an examination of the Old Testament passages bearing upon it, it would seem to have been a national and not a religious custom. The religious character of fasting seems to have been evolved out of the national fastings which the Jews inaugurated during the Captivity. The reign of the rabbis over Jewish affairs made national fasting into a religious ordinance and made it a burden. "The spirit of priesthood which claims the guidance of men's consciences and lives must work their minute and multiplied requirements; and is sure to delight in schemes which put men's bodies and bodily habits under painful restraints." No man is required by New Testament teaching to fast—to do so is no part of religious duty. What Christ urges is simply this: "If you must fast, do so for God's knowledge and do not make a show of it." Geikie says of the extravagancies and insincerities against which the Lord protested: "When fasting the Pharisees strewed their heads with ashes, and neither washed nor anointed them-

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selves, nor trimmed their beards, but put on wretched clothing and showed themselves in all the outward signs of mourning and sadness used for the dead. Insincerity made capital of feigned humiliation and contrition." It was this that Christ condemned.

150. Does Not the Injunction Against Being Conformed to the World (Rom. 12:2) Apply to Fashions, Such as Shaving the Hair from the Face and the Wearing of Fashionable Dress?

The injunction applies to the mind, as you will see by the context of the passage quoted. The Christian must not adopt worldly principles, nor be governed by worldly motives. His life should not be conformed to the world. There is no virtue in wearing old-fashioned clothes, or in a man making himself conspicuous in any way. Extravagance in dress and eccentricity in manner should be avoided. If the world had nothing by which to recognize a Christian but his manner of shaving, the man must be living a very poor life. If he is showing Christ's spirit in loving helpfulness, in magnanimity, kindness, forbearance, charity, he is more usefully serving Christ and fulfilling his obligations than he would be by shaving or not shaving. You remember that the Pharisees were irreproachable so far as outward appearance and observance were concerned, but Christ denounced them.

151. Is It Wrong for Christian People to Read Fiction?

The early prejudice among the Puritans and some of their followers against the reading of fiction was

caused by the fact that so much of early fiction was vicious. It seems very unwise now to hold to this idea, because so many works of fiction are distinctly helpful. When the prejudice against fiction as such is analyzed it seems difficult to find anything true or solid about it. Christ himself was famous for his parables, which, aside from their authoritative spiritual value, were among the very best pieces of the world's literature. *Pilgrim's Progress* is fiction, and has probably done more for the cause of Christ than any other one book except the Bible. Christian people should, however, use great care in selecting books to read, and should be quick to discountenance any book which has a harmful influence. While it is not necessary to cast aside all books which depict evil, yet any book in which evil is made to appear attractive, any book written by an author who seems to like sin—an attitude that it is not unfair to say some modern writers seem to have taken—should be condemned. There are many excellent novels—so-called—some of them conveying spiritual truths, others full of interest because of their delightful portraiture of human character and action, and still others attractive no less for their brilliant ability than for the vivid description of scenes and events. There is also a very large class of novels that may be called worthless and even vicious. The habit of indiscriminate novel reading is generally admitted to be one that has a deteriorating result on the intellectual powers of the reader. Those who read many novels acquire a passion for such literature; they become creatures of wax, molded successively by every character they encounter, and partaking of the nature of all. The habitual novel reader ceases to

think or originate for himself. Worse still, he gradually loses all taste for more solid literature, and cannot peruse or absorb anything that calls for the slightest mental effort. This applies to the vast array of publications which have no other aim than to excite the imagination and stir the emotions. If one will read novels, let them be only the best—standards of their class, by authors who write with a high purpose, and convey a wholesome as well as an interesting lesson.

152. Does God Forgive Those Who Say They Only Forgive When Forgiveness Is Asked?

It would be hard to make any such principle fit in with these words of Jesus: "I say unto you, Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44); or the words of Paul, quoted from Proverbs: "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink" (Rom. 12:20; Prov. 25:21). In the passage in Matthew about forgiving "until seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:22) nothing at all is said about forgiveness being asked, though in Luke 17:3, 4 mention is made of the repentance of the trespasser. The point is that a Christian who has been wronged must have the forgiving spirit, whether forgiveness is asked or not. He cannot cherish bitterness and resentment in his heart. He must be like his divine Master, who prayed: "Father, forgive them," even while he was being crucified (Luke 23:34), and like Stephen, who prayed for his murderers as he died: "Lord, lay not this sin

to their charge" (Acts 7:60). But in the nature of the case, forgiveness cannot actually be received by the offending party until he has a sense of guilt and a desire for pardon. An offer of forgiveness would be meaningless to one who has no feeling of having done wrong. God has pardoned us long ago, but we really do not get that pardon into our consciousness until we feel our need of it and ask for it. So while we must love those who wrong us and must forgive them instantly and fully in our hearts as soon as the wrong is done, they cannot possess and enjoy our forgiveness until they desire and welcome it. Yet S. H. Hadley used to say, in telling about his work for the drunkards and outcasts: "If a man cheats me nineteen times I shame him out of his frauds by trusting him the twentieth." Certainly one who has not this forgiving spirit cannot expect nor receive God's forgiveness. Forgiveness is a detail of the greater feeling of love. We must love every one; and in doing this we automatically and instantly forgive all who wrong us.

153. How Does a Forgiving Spirit Manifest Itself Toward the One Who Did the Wrong?

A "forgiving spirit" means, first and last, a loving spirit. While we cannot prevent a feeling of deep grief where we ourselves are wronged, the greater grief ought to be for the one who has done wrong. If a son should wrong his mother she feels more sorry for the boy who has done wrong than for herself who suffers the wrong. The same ought to be true of husband and wife, brother and sister, neighbor and neighbor. There is love and forgiveness in the heart the

moment the wrong is done. In some respects, however, it is quite impossible to have the same feeling toward the wrongdoer before forgiveness is asked. Our affection for him, before the wrong, was largely based on what we believed him to be; when we find that he is not the person we thought him to be our feelings of delight in his association and admiration for him necessarily undergo a change. Our great desire must be to bring him back to the purity which he has lost. And he himself cannot regain that lost purity till he has confessed his wrong and asked forgiveness. So, while, for our own sake, we freely forgive, and continue to feel and act kindly, yet for his own sake we must seek to lead him to a recognition and acknowledgment of his wrong. All these considerations will unavoidably affect the details of our conduct. While every act must be kind, we must not allow the wrongdoer to think that we are insensible of the fact that he has done wrong, but we must show him that we are earnestly desiring his repentance and restoration.

154. Is to Be Oppressed by a Sense of Sin for Which One Has Asked Pardon Proof of Non-forgiveness?

By no means. You should rather regard it as an evidence of a lack of faith. You must remember that you are not forgiven because of your consciousness of pardon, but because God for Christ's sake has blotted out your sins. God does not break his promises. Those who repent and plead to be forgiven for Christ's sake, at the same time renouncing their sins, are assuredly forgiven, whether they realize the fact

or not. If you owed a debt which you could not pay, and your creditor canceled that debt, you would not worry about your own consciousness, but would accept his assurance. Put the gloomy thoughts away from you, and, rejoicing in God's promise, go forward, carefully avoiding a repetition of your sins. Assurance will come in time.

155. Does God Only Forgive as We Forgive?

The passage in the Lord's Prayer relative to the divine forgiveness of trespasses as we ourselves forgive others who have trespassed against us is to be interpreted spiritually. We are debtors to God on account of our sins against him. We have neglected his worship, have not honored him with our substance, have transgressed his holy law and have abused the blessings he has bestowed upon us. We ask him to pardon these offenses for which we in our own hearts feel that we cannot atone, for we are spiritually insolvent, and he forgives us not as a right, but as a gift of his divine grace freely bestowed. So we, in turn, are to forgive others, and all the more that they are unable to render us the material satisfaction which the world exacts in such cases. If misfortune has overtaken a man, so that he is unable to pay his honest debts, we must include him in the category of those entitled to our forgiveness; but one who has the means to pay his just debts is not entitled to claim or expect consideration of this generous character, nor was the Lord's Prayer intended to convey such an impression. Elsewhere we are told to "owe no man anything," and to "pay that thou owest." We are to show a merciful and forgiving spirit in all cases where it is needed, to

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forgive freely, but our Lord himself has recognized the validity of honorable obligations. To counsel otherwise would have been to encourage dishonesty and to put a premium on wrongdoing. The whole problem is a spiritual one—that of mercy and the exercise of a forgiving spirit in cases where it can properly be applied. We ourselves are not to ask God for that mercy we refuse to others who ask it at our hands.

156. Once a Sin Is Forgiven, Will God Remember It?

God utterly blots out the record of the sin he has forgiven. This is very distinctly and emphatically promised in many passages of the Bible. Perhaps the most explicit is Ezek. 33:16: "None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right: he shall surely live." There are, however, warnings to the pardoned man that he must quit his sin. Having once been pardoned, he must be careful not to abuse God's magnanimity under the impression that God will continue to pardon. There are many warnings of the peril that a man incurs who returns to an evil life after once being delivered from it.

157. Does the Bible Commend Generosity?

There are so many passages in the Bible commending the generous heart that one may gather from a comparison of those noted below what may be called the Bible estimate of a model giver: Lev. 25:35; Deut. 15:7; Ps. 68:5; Ps. 10:14; Isa. 1:17; James 1:27;

Deut. 14:29; Deut. 15:10; Prov. 19:17; II Cor. 8:12; Luke 21:3, 4. etc. He who gives gladly, generously, unostentatiously, with kindness and consideration for the feelings of the recipient; he who gives in his name who gave his life for us and through whom we have the gift of eternal life; who gives expecting no return, not even thanks; who gives that he may have a heavenly treasury instead of accumulating a big bank account here to leave to others when he passes away; who regards his wealth as a stewardship which he must use to the glory of God and the good of his fellow men—he is the model giver. We should not judge others, however, who may have a single great and worthy object in view. Those men and women who enrich the whole world by their gifts to noble causes that advance humanity should not be left out of the category of model givers. We know personally some who devote their means systematically to the support of missions and the spread of the Gospel, or to the reclamation of the fallen, the amelioration of poverty, the cause of the sick, etc. America is rich in model givers of this class.

158. Does Every Good Desire Come from God?

It is impossible to say just what impulses proceed from self and what are the direct influence of God in the unconverted soul. Some impulses to kindness seem purely natural, such as the instinctive care of a mother for her child, which is found in beasts as well as in human kind. The affection of animals for people, like the affection of a dog for his master, is sometimes tremendously strong. While all these noble and beautiful things come from God, they do not necessarily indi-

cate the presence of God in the soul. He has planted certain admirable traits both in the instincts of animals and the minds of men; he also has, of course, the power of communicating with men, speaking to their minds and consciences by his Spirit and by his Word. Reason is higher than instinct and conscience is higher than both, but even conscience may not mean that God is dwelling in the soul. Conscience seems to be not so much the voice of God as the human faculty of hearing that voice. But at conversion God's Spirit comes into a man's soul. He is no longer outside, but within; mystically though actually linked to the man himself. The great change then is that a man finds himself loving God, eager to get his messages, anxious to please him. The impulses to do good, instead of being vague and weak, become definite and intense. The converted man feels that God is within him, making suggestions, awakening holy, unselfish, beautiful desires, and giving him power to carry out these good desires in vigorous and successful action.

159. Must We Keep on Trying to Do Good Though It Is Unappreciated?

Those who are of the household of faith are admonished "not to be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." And this applies even to the small details of every-day life. There are many things that are discouraging, viewed through the lenses of the world's estimation, and the lack of appreciation for kindness or of gratitude for help rendered to others is not the least of these. Yet this need not trouble one who is doing good not for praise or reward and not even for thanks, but for the sake of

him who "went about doing good." A truly noble spirit, inspired by the love of Christ and humanity, will not seek any reward beyond the approval of a good conscience and the knowledge that he is serving the divine will. The real merit in a good act largely lies in the fact that we do it from a spirit of brotherly love, without thought of recompense, and all the better if it can be done quietly and unostentatiously, even so secretly that the left hand does not know what the right hand doeth. (Matt. 6:3, 4.) God's secret service is the richest in spiritual rewards.

160. Is the Neglect to Do Good, Sin?

Yes; we are commanded to do good, and not to do it is disobedience. The man who had one talent (Matt. 25:24-30) was punished not for losing it but because he did not employ it. The people on the Lord's left hand (Matt. 25:41-46) were not punished for doing wrong but for neglecting to do good.

161. How Can One Who Fell from Grace Be Restored to Grace?

Any one who desires to return to the Lord or to a special state of grace once enjoyed can certainly do so. No one need ever fear that such a return is impossible so long as the desire is there; it is those who have lost this desire who are in the most grievous danger. The way back is by exercising faith again. "Praying and feeling very repentant" will not accomplish the result unless you also believe. You must believe that "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, to-day and forever." You must believe that anything he did for you once he can do for you again. You must literally

and positively trust him to do for you now what he did for you in those happier days. You see, what causes all the trouble is doubting him. Doubt seems a slight thing, but it is enough to fill the whole spiritual sky with darkness, to take away all spiritual strength, and to make the spiritual path full of overwhelming difficulties. Trust Jesus again. Trust him to forgive your sins, and then cease worrying about them. Trust him to cleanse your heart, and then cease worrying about that. As you trust him to forgive and cleanse you, you will realize how near he is to you; this will awaken the old-time feelings of love and friendship for him, and with the returning love will come returning joy and power.

162. Can One Be a True Christian Without Any Special Evidence of Growth in Grace or Progress in the Spiritual Life?

Such an experience may, and doubtless often does, happen in the case of those who, though sincere believers at heart, have never taken the first step toward those Christian activities which are the road to spiritual growth and development. Going to church is only a part of the Christian's duty. Having found the truth himself, he should strive earnestly to give it to others. There are many ways in which he can do service. By kindness and upright example; by quiet, unostentatious charity, seeking out the needy, who are to be found in almost every community; by visiting the sick, the prisoners, the shut-ins; by reading to the aged and infirm; by taking an interest in missions, and, last but not least, by striving, in tactful and kindly ways, to arouse the same spiritual desire

you feel in your own heart, in the hearts of your church fellows. Many a Christian makes an excellent team-worker who cannot work well alone. Take the minister into your confidence. Tell him to help you to "get busy." If you feel led that way, connect with some Gospel mission and get right into the work. Don't hesitate to confess Christ at every fitting opportunity; it will strengthen you and give you confidence. Ask the Lord to open the way and to give you equipment and the power to reach the hearts of men and lead them to the cross. Ask in Jesus' name, nothing doubting, and you will receive. Do not be over-ambitious at the outset. Take the humblest opportunity that offers and make the most of it, and hope for better things. Once entered in that service, whatever talents you may possess will be in no danger of rusting through idleness.

163. Is It Right for a Christian to Joke With His Fellow Employees?

Innocent mirth is not a sin, nor should it be confounded with wicked levity or godless conversation. If your fellow employees are non-Christians, their mirth will probably be of the latter sort, and should be avoided. There is a good-fellowship and whole-heartedness which is pleasant and agreeable, and many very good people are noted for their wit and humor. But mere worldly merriment, vain and empty conversation, and, above all, that species of wit which is low, coarse and debasing, should be shunned by any one who desires spiritual growth and a "pure heart."

164. Is It Possible to Be Truly Kind Without Being a Christian?

We must not judge others, especially on general principles, and where we do not know the facts. There are many people who, while not professing Christianity, are yet full of sympathy for those in suffering. Kindness and generous helpfulness were prominent features of Christ's teachings while here on earth. He taught his followers to love one another and to cultivate the spirit of kindness to all who came within their influence and who needed help. He regarded any kindness shown to the needy, the sick, the prisoners, the destitute as done to himself, and, equally, any indifference shown to the sufferers he condemned in the words "Inasmuch as ye have not done it to the least of these, ye did it not unto me." There was nothing in his language to convey the lesson that kindness was to be confined exclusively to those who were of the faith. His own love and pity went out to the whole world. When the case is that of a believing brother who needs our help such a one has a double claim upon our practical sympathy as being a member of the household of Christ.

165. Is It a Lie Not to Tell the Whole Truth to One Who Has the Right to Know the Whole Truth?

It depends upon the circumstances of the case. By keeping back a portion of the truth one may give to a particular statement the color and effect of a lie, even though it should be literal fact. Conveying a wrong impression by whatever means is indirect lying.

On the other hand, we can imagine a case in which one might be silent from laudable motives as to certain facts, the bringing out of which might serve no good purpose, but would involve others in sorrow or disgrace. Even in such a case the motive must be unimpeachable. As to the "right to know," there is none who has the right to know the innermost secrets of the heart save God.

166. Should a Person Keep a Matrimonial Engagement at All Hazards?

It is an old and perhaps fairly true proverb that "a bad promise is better broken than kept," but its too general application gives opportunity for a fickle excuse for promise-breaking, where all the obligations of honor and duty point to a different course. If, however, it should be clearly shown that the promise was a bad one, calculated to make two lives miserable, and given impulsively and without experience, wisdom would suggest its reconsideration by both parties. While there is nothing more contemptible than a disregard for an honorable pledge, there is nothing more foolish than to hesitate at an honorable avowal of one's mistake before it is too late.

167. Would a Christian Girl Be Justified in Marrying an Atheist?

Try to answer Paul's question (II Cor. 6:15): "What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" The Christian girl who married such a man would be separated from him in the highest, holiest and best part of her nature by a wide gulf. Her husband would have no communion with her in the emotions and

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principles which should be the chief part of her life. We cannot imagine a union more uncongenial and unpropitious. We do not know what the penalty would be beyond the grave, but we believe it would be misery for the wife on this side of it.

168. Ought a Christian Minister Attend a Circus?

We do not believe that a minister, any more than a layman, is to be condemned because he pays a visit to a circus. As a rule, such entertainments are instructive and amusing, and free from objectionable features. There are probably very few men or women who haven't some pleasing recollection of the circus. There might be occasions, however, when, for various sufficient reasons, it would be obviously improper for a preacher of the Gospel to attend such a performance.

169. Is the Custom of Stated Salaries for Ministers Such as Can Be Defended on the Basis of New Testament Teaching?

Under the Levitical law due provision was made for the maintenance of the priests and teachers in the Jewish church, but nothing of this kind was known in the primitive Christian Church. It is distinctly implied, however, in various passages of the New Testament that the church had a duty to maintain its religious teachers (see Matt. 10:10, I Cor. 9:14, etc.). In the apostolic age this maintenance consisted in supplying their immediate personal wants (II Cor. 11:7, 8 and Phil. 4:16-18). In those early days the church

owned little or no property, but later specific provision was made for the support of the clergy. This included fees for particular services, firstfruits, voluntary offerings which probably supplemented any meager allowance from the church's treasury. There is no specific rule laid down in the New Testament on the subject. The ancient Jewish law is regarded by some as a precedent. It is very clear that, even in apostolic times, it was a recognized principle that the laborer was "worthy of his hire." In our own day a congregation would be considered very unappreciative of God's message to men if it did not support its own minister.

170. Are the Methods of Preachers Who Use Slang and Colloquial Language in the Pulpit to Be Approved?

If Christ was right and if the professed belief of all the evangelical churches of our country is right, viz., that man possesses a spiritual part which neither time nor death can efface, then and in that event the one fact which must forever overtop all other facts is this: that man's soul, or the spiritual part of a man—call it what you will—must be awakened to the consciousness that to "fear God and keep his commandments is the whole duty of man." There is one thing that, in a Christian sense, is like the light of the sun compared with the light of the millions of stars which the sun's light hides absolutely, and that one thing is this: the soul's eternal salvation. If this is not true, then the professed belief of all of our so-called Evangelical churches is a farce, and the teachings of Jesus Christ are simply so much idle talk. If this is true—

if the consequences are fraught with such awful destinies—then the kind of preaching which is most productive of bringing the most people to this consciousness is the best kind of preaching, view it from whatever standpoint you will. When a preacher of the Gospel delivers his message with strength and courage, dealing with the evils of his time, he doubtless does his duty as a servant of Christ, as he understands that duty. The battle against sin is not one to be fought with kid gloves nor to be settled with polite speeches or elegant phraseology. Paul and Silas, when they preached in Thessalonica and were accused of “turning the world upside down,” met with the same kind of criticism that is visited upon some modern preachers and evangelists. That preacher or evangelist who never strikes fire, or arouses opposition, is an indifferent servant. We need to-day zeal and earnestness in the pulpit, even more than literary or oratorical ability. Simplicity and directness, strength and gentleness, fervent persuasion and humble appeal—each has its proper place. Luther’s words have been described as “half battles” in their intensity and forcefulness; Weaver used the dialect of the coal-pit; Jerry McAuley, that of the prison and slums, and Sunday that of the ball-field and the thoughtless multitude. There are times when the modern minister or evangelist feels that he is dealing with an antagonist, to cope with whom he can use at times only the homely sling of David and a vulgar pebble of the brook. God in his wisdom uses many diverse instrumentalities in reaching the hearts of men, and multitudes are moved and won by methods that would not influence and might even repel others. The real test lies in the result of

the work. If it finds acceptance and souls are won who then should be against it?

**171. Should a Man Going into the Ministry
Have Always Possessed the Highest
Character, or Does It Matter What He
Has Been?**

The Lord chooses his own instruments, and sometimes makes what seems to mortals a strange choice. Saul was a persecutor and "the chief of sinners" before he became Paul the faithful apostle. Thousands have been taken from the ranks of sin and after undergoing a change of heart have become valiant captains in God's army. John Bunyan, the converted tinker; John Newton, once infidel and libertine; Richard Weaver, the drunken pitman, and thousands on thousands of others have been called from the depths of sin to become active workers for souls. Every mission in the land can point to once notorious sinners now redeemed and laboring as preachers and evangelists, and not a few as regular pastors. The fact that some of our ablest spiritual leaders, in all ages, have been thus chosen demonstrates that a man's past sins, when pardoned through redeeming grace, should not weigh against him among Christians, since all are sinners and under condemnation by law.

**172. What Is the Basis for the Respect and
Confidence Which We Accord Ministers?**

In I Thess. 5:12, 13 the apostle commends the leaders in church work—pastors, elders and teachers—to the respect and confidence of the congregation. They were to recognize their office and treat them

with respect, giving attention to their admonitions and responding liberally to their requests for material aid in the Lord's work. The church in Thessalonica had been lately organized ; some of the ministers were probably new to the place and the people and Paul urged that they be cordially received. They were specially chosen laborers in the vineyard and were entitled, if for no other reason than that they had been selected for places of such importance and responsibility in the Gospel ministry and to work for the salvation of souls, to reverent love and cordial support. Above all this they should be well received "for the very works' sake." It was advice which might be taken by many congregations to-day with great advantage, especially in dealing with any new spiritual leader who comes among them.

173. Is It Right for a Christian to Take More than the Bare Necessities of Life?

It is perfectly right that one should enjoy all the good things of life in moderation, always keeping in view what is due from himself to others, and the duty of helping those who are in need ; but indulgence in luxuries, extravagance in any form, and all pleasures that are other than innocent, educative, recreative and healthful, are to be avoided. There is nothing to be gained by living the life of an ascetic or a misanthrope. The Almighty gives us life to make the best of it we can, and it is better to walk in the brightness of the sunshine than in the gloom. One who diffuses sunshine and happiness is more likely to be serviceable in the upbuilding of the kingdom of righteousness than one who takes existence here as a penance.

174. May a Christian Take an Oath in the Witness Box Without Offending Against Christ's Injunction, "Swear Not"?

The judicial oath or solemn asseveration or promise, as in the presence of God, that you will tell the truth, should not be confounded with oaths of another character. An oath to take vengeance, uttered in the name of Deity, is an illustration of the perverted use of a solemn adjuration. So, also, is an oath taken in levity. An appeal to God, or to any sacred thing, was a custom among the ancient Hebrews, who used such oaths in private and official business. The Christian custom of taking judicial oaths was founded upon the Jewish, the oath on the Gospels in court being the legitimate adaptation of the Hebrew mode of placing the hands upon the Book of the Law. There are certain sects, including the Mennonites, Quakers and Moravians, who apply literally the words of Christ, "Swear not at all," and therefore regard all oaths as unlawful. In view of all the facts, the taking of a judicial oath, or promise before Deity to tell the truth and render exact justice in the cause at issue, must remain a matter to be decided by the conscience of the individual.

175. How Can We Feel Assured of God's Pardon?

It is so simple and so easy that many people miss it. They seem to think it is impossible that so much joy can come from such a simple thing. That thing is to trust God. Doubt and unbelief shut out all the glory and peace of salvation; faith lets them in. But before you can trust God you must be certain that you need him. Only sinners need him, those who are

appalled by the enormity of their failings and faults as seen in the light of him to whom sin is impossible. Only he who has been frightened by the lightnings of divine wrath and who has been stunned by the accompanying terrifying thunders of "thou shalt!" "thou shalt not" of Mount Sinai can fully appreciate the certainty that the lightning has spent its force on the cross and the rumblings of anger have been stilled on Calvary, never more to harm those who flee there in childlike helplessness. They trust the Father who so loved them that he gave his only begotten Son to be that Brother and Friend who constantly holds out welcoming strong arms while he soothingly assures: "Fear not, I will comfort thee." Let us think of our children, infants if you please, or even grown-ups. Think how miserable and unhappy they would be if they were all the time wondering whether or not we loved them; if when they had asked us to forgive them for doing something that displeased us and we had assured them that we did forgive them they should wonder whether or not we meant it, and should keep coming to us again and again asking forgiveness for the same offense. Theirs would be a very unhappy childhood; so we are unhappy when we do not utterly trust the love of your father God.

*What more can he say than to you he hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?*

176. Are We to Address Our Prayers to God the Father or to Jesus?

One of the very greatest arguments for the deity of Jesus is that he allowed people to kneel and worship

him. The apostles were horrified when dwellers in pagan cities attempted to worship them, and even the angel who talked with John refused to be worshiped. "See thou do it not," he said. But Jesus accepted worship as his due. He forgave the sins of the man sick with palsy (Matt. 9:2), and of the woman who came to anoint his feet (Luke 7:48). Others objected to his exercise of this power, but he would not retract. One of the earliest historical characterizations of Christians was that "they offered prayers to Christ as God." This has been done all through the history of Christianity. And the results prove that it is a right thing to do. People ask Jesus for forgiveness and help and receive what they ask for. That was the simple prayer which changed the life of S. H. Hadley: "Lord Jesus, can you help me?" "I and my Father are one," Jesus said. The form of address makes no difference. The ordinary form is to address the Father in Jesus' name; but it is helpful rather than otherwise to vary this form occasionally with a direct address to Christ.

177. What Shall Be Our Attitude in Prayer as to Whether God's Will or Our Will Should Prevail?

We must always remember in praying that God knows everything and we know very little. We often deny the earnest requests of our children because we know that what they ask will do them harm rather than good. It has sometimes happened that when friends have prayed insistently for the recovery of loved ones, other calamities and sufferings, perhaps worse than death, have overwhelmed them. So our prayers should

end like Christ's own prayer: "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." What is most important in prayer is to enter into such close fellowship with God, to have such intimate conversation with him, that we come to have something of an understanding of what he himself desires. No matter how strong our own wishes may be, there should always be the stronger and deeper wish that God's will be done. And we must remember that his will is our best welfare and that of all our friends. Sometimes when a Christian is praying for something not specifically promised in the written Word, he seems to receive an "assurance" that God wishes to do certain things for or through him. After such a deep, clear, unmistakable assurance he is justified in praying vehemently, battling against the forces of doubt and wrong, holding fast to the promise and remembering that God "cannot deny himself." Especially can we pray in this manner when the prayer is for the forgiveness of our sins, the cleansing of our hearts, or our endowment with the Holy Spirit, for these things are plainly, specifically promised in his Word. In cases of sickness, while there are many promises for health, we know that we and all our friends must some time die. While using all the human means and skill available we should pray, always in the name of Christ, that health may be restored. And while there is no doubt that many sicknesses would be healed if God's people had more faith, yet we must be willing to let God choose the time when he takes our loved ones to himself. And when they go we should not grieve but rejoice to know that they are safe with him, awaiting our coming in the new home.

178. Are We to Take All Our Troubles to the Lord in Prayer?

We are assured that if we seek first the spiritual blessings—"the things of the kingdom"—all the rest will be added unto us, since he knows we have need of them. We should be satisfied, therefore, to put faith in God for all our daily needs, and to do the best we can to help bring this about, relying on his blessing to crown our efforts. There are many things we need not enumerate in our petitions. Mr. Spurgeon, when his church committee met to consider appeals for help, would pick out a few letters and, after glancing at their contents, would say: "We won't trouble the Lord about these; I'll attend to them myself." God loves to be helped, and he has endowed us with reason and other faculties for that purpose. He will always bless the efforts of the believing, self-reliant Christian who goes ahead on simple faith. There are, however, many good people who take comfort in laying all their troubles before him and who will take no step without prayer. They find it a daily and almost hourly necessity. We have no word of adverse criticism for these dear ones, who live in an atmosphere of prayer. There are others who submit the conduct of their lives to him, but without taking up those things that seem small and trivial. It is a matter of temperament and doubtless both are right. But if we have the broader, deeper faith, we will learn to trust him and to ask in our prayers only those things that are spiritually or materially vital. We have an unquestionable right to take all our real troubles to the throne—troubles of temptation, of doubt, of anger, of ill health, of want

and distress, of friends who need to be prayed for, etc. If we choose to omit the trivialities, trusting him for them, it is better so. He knows all about us and we should have faith that he will supply all our needs as he has promised (Phil. 4: 19).

179. What Are We to Do to Pray More Effectively?

Prayer is simply the wire that brings the electricity of God's power down to our needs. It is true that we have no "power," no spiritual power, in ourselves. All we can do is to make way for God's power in us. "It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." You say you seem to have lost your power in prayer. It may prove to be a very helpful and useful thing to you to feel just that way. You are finding out what we must all find out before God can do greater things for us and through us, that you have no power of your own. "When I am weak, then am I strong," wrote Paul. The best way to pray is to realize that we have not only no power of our own, but not even any wisdom of our own to ask for the things we need most. We must seek God directly; get into touch with him; ask him what he wants us to have, what he wants us to do. This leads us to a new conception of God's will. We begin to realize how strong it is; we begin to feel sure that God will work out his will in our lives. We cannot compel the wills of other people to yield to God; but when our own wills are absolutely surrendered to him, and our faith takes hold upon him, he will not only work out his own will in us, but will show us how best to persuade others also to yield their lives to

him. Do not worry; do not fret; do not doubt. Leave everything to the infinite power of God, and trust him to do the very best for you, and, through you, for those you love.

180. How Can We Do Everything to the Glory of God?

This exhortation in I Cor. 10:31 refers to our motive, our purpose in life. The one supreme purpose of every Christian life should be to glorify God—that is, to reflect credit and honor upon him. A patriot wishes to bring honor to his country, a wife to her husband, a pupil to his master, a friend to his friend. If we truly love God we shall be anxious that he shall be understood and obeyed and honored and loved by the world. The whole matter becomes simpler when we relate it to Christ. In Col. 3:17, where Paul repeats this same idea, his words are: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." The true friend of Jesus wishes to please him in all things, and earnestly desires that all men should love and honor him. Therefore, since he is known as a Christian and bears the name of Christ, he must do nothing un-Christlike, nothing that will bring reproach to the name of Christ. Instead of taking pleasure out of life this way of living brings vast pleasure into life. All pure and wholesome pleasure is increased infinitely by the thought of Christ's love. As the song of birds and blossom of flowers reflect the beauty and glory of God, so do the innocent, natural joys of a Christian show the world God's kindness, his beauty and his goodness.

181. Should We Persist in Prayer Though God to All Appearance Does Not Answer?

We need constantly to guard against being self-centered in our prayers. Of course, God wishes us to tell him what we want in the same simple way that a child tells his parents. But it is necessary to be entirely willing that God's will shall be done, not ours. If we truly love him we shall come to be anxious, not so much that we shall be gratified as that he shall be gratified. What we shall be particularly eager about is to get better acquainted with him; to learn more of his will; and to seek by our efforts and our faith to have his will done in the world. But if the gift is something good and pure and worthy and we cannot help desiring it for ourselves, then we may keep on asking for it, either until it is received or until he makes us sure that it is not his will that we should receive it. At the same time we must remember that God is omniscient, all-wise. He sees into the future where we cannot. His ways are past finding out, and his design for us oftentimes beyond even our most sanguine hopes. He alone, however, knows the time and the circumstances under which his blessings and the answers to our prayers are best calculated to meet our requirements. He is our omnipotent Father, our kind Counselor and Friend. What more can we ask? All the way through we must trust him, never doubting for a minute that he loves us, that he longs to give us everything that will make us truly happy. Perhaps he wants you to believe more positively that this gift is his wish for you and that he will actually bestow it. "According to your faith be it unto you." "He that spared not his own Son but delivered him

up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" We have a right to look to our Father to supply all our needs, physical and spiritual—not to grant us luxuries or such things as the world esteems most, but to give us what we really stand in need of. There is, however, a supreme request which we ought to make and even to be importunate until we get it, namely: a clean heart, a contrite spirit, a soul at peace with God through the love of his dear Son who died for us. If we ask these in all faith and sincerity, he will surely grant us forgiveness. It is not necessary to continually urge for pardon of the old sins—the old life; incessant pleading shows our lack of faith. Take God at his word; then, having once established this new relationship and having begun the life of the kingdom, we have the Master's promise that "all things will be added unto us." Our dear Father knows what we need. He knows, if we are sick, how we long for health, and if we have pain, how we sigh for relief. Then, too, we have a right to ask him to bless such means as are being used for our physical restoration. We should not forget that now, as of old, he is still able to "pardon all our iniquities and to heal our diseases." He is still the great Physician, who cures both the soul and body, if we only have faith in him; and he it is who gives us strength to bear our afflictions, and transforms the furnace of trial into a place of blessing.

182. How Can I Learn to Pray?

The important thing about prayer is not to ask for what we want, but to find out what God wants. We are urged to bring our requests to God, but with every

prayer there must be the willing assent: "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." Unless we are very careful our prayers will be selfish. We ask for things simply because we desire them, forgetting that in many cases God cannot answer our prayer without taking the thing we ask away from some one else. In praying we should think always of others, and how the granting of our petition will affect them. We must try to get God's point of view and understand what bearing the granting of our prayer would have on the whole progress of his kingdom. The first essential in praying is to come into definite personal communion with God himself. Often in prayer there comes the definite revelation of God's will, so that we seem to know what he plans and purposes. With this assurance will come a definite faith that the thing we ask will come to pass because it is God's will. We must pray in the name of Christ; we must become part of the great plan he is working out; we must pray that certain things be done because we love Christ and know that Christ wishes to have them done. So the way to become effectual in prayer is to come closer to Christ; to trust him to forgive all our sins and cleanse our hearts; to become intimate friends of his so that we shall understand his wishes and long to have them carried out; to let him so change our hearts that we shall love others more than we love ourselves, and shall pray chiefly not that we shall be made happy but that others shall be blest; to have such a clear vision of his love and power as will lead us to a faith that his will shall be carried out in our lives and that our prayers must prevail because they coincide with his almighty will.

183. Is There Any Limit to the Prevailing Power of Prayer?

Jesus placed no limitations on the prevailing power of prayer. He has said, however, that we ought to seek first the things of the kingdom, and all the rest will be added; that is, a sufficiency for our needs. We should strive to know what are the things for which we should pray, and that are according to his will. Thus, to pray for wealth or for power could not be considered as coming in this category. The granting of such desires might be followed with evil to ourselves and others. Hence, it is right to say that we should pray for those things that he knows to be best for us, and which are in accordance with his will. The reference to praying for the removal of mountains is a figure of speech designed to show the vastness of God's munificence when our faith rises to meet it. The prayer of faith *can* remove mountains of difficulty from our path, and can overcome the seemingly insurmountable. The believer, therefore, should ask to be led that he may not pray amiss, through a wish to indulge in mere worldly desires. Many good Christians who live by faith have acknowledged in their experience instances in which their prayers have been denied, and they have been able to see later what a calamity it would have been to them had their desires been granted.

184. Does God Punish in This Life with Sickness and Other Misfortune?

The Bible does not teach that all trouble comes from God as a punishment. It recognizes the fact that trouble is in the world, and, while it has some very

definite things to say about it, it does not attempt to give a complete solution of the whole problem. Heb. 12:5-11 declares that God does in some instances discipline or "chasten" those whom he loves, but this could hardly be called punishment (see also Deu. 8:5; Ps. 94:12; John 15:2). Sometimes, however, calamity is a definite punishment, as in many cases during the history of Israel, and particularly in their exile. The book of Job is a beautiful explanation of a form of suffering which has the double purpose of disciplining the soul and glorifying God. Nothing can bring such credit to God as the demonstration made by a soul that trusts and praises him in the midst of misfortune. Paul and the other apostles gloried in their opportunities to suffer for Jesus' sake. They rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame in his name" (Acts 5:41). They felt that he had borne so much for them that they wanted to bear something for him. The Bible nowhere encourages people to dodge suffering; it exhorts them to bear it, while at the same time it exhorts them to lessen the sufferings of others, and help them bear their woes (see James 1:2-5; I Pet. 4:12-19; Gal. 6:2).

185. What Is the True Doctrine of Restitution?

It is very clearly set forth in the Scripture that restitution should follow repentance. The change of heart may come before or after the act of restitution takes place, but in either event the convert will feel bound to make restitution at the earliest possible moment and in the fullest manner. It is expected of us that we shall make it right with our brother and we have no right to ask God to bestow on us the fulness

of his gracious pardon until we do this (see Neh. 5: 10, 11; Luke 19: 8; Rom. 13: 8). In his Gospel work Evangelist Moody emphasized restitution wherever practicable as a necessary adjunct to complete salvation. A few principles, however, are fixed, and apply without exception to all such cases. In the first place, you must bring yourself to agree to obey God *at any cost*. This is precisely what Jesus meant by his stern words about the right eye or the right hand. He probably did not mean that a circumstance would ever arise in which a man should pluck out his eye or cut off his hand. He thought too much of efficiency for that. He wants two-eyed and two-armed men in his army. But he did mean that it is far more important to obey God than it is to have two arms and two eyes. We must become so desperately in earnest to be right with God that we promise him that *when he makes his will clear we will obey*. Now that does not mean that we must go right off and do some fantastic or unreasonable thing before God has made his will clear. We must wait till his will is clear. That is all the consecration he ever asks from anybody: to obey, step by step, as he makes the way unmistakably plain. "My sheep know my voice," he said. If you are not sure it is his voice speaking, wait till you are sure before taking the step. Where any property is involved, even if the amount is very small, it should be returned to the owner or his heirs. You will find such a procedure easier than you fear. People do not ridicule the "conscience fund." They admire a man who is trying to do absolutely right. In the case of conduct in which others are involved the matter is more difficult. If your confession in-

volves another make very sure that the offense was really a serious matter and confer with those involved before making any statement. As to making financial restitution out of funds absolutely needed for present use, that problem is more difficult. In such a case it would be wise to make confession to those who were wronged, and ask them to give you time to make full restitution. Above all, think of God as a friend, who is trying to lead you to a place of perfect happiness, not as a tyrant demanding obedience to harsh and arbitrary rules. He is our best friend. You may win peace by trusting him. Then he will guide and strengthen you in untangling the problems and undoing the mistakes of the past.

186. May We Pray with the Same Assurance for Another's Salvation as We Do for Our Own?

We know that God is concerned for those who are still rejecting him even more than we can be, and loves them even more than we can love them. We can have greater influence to bring our dear ones to Christ if we have a cheerful, bright, trustful experience. We must remember, however, that God does not save people against their wills. In all our interpretations of Scripture we must be reasonable, interpreting each passage in the light of all the rest. The promise in John, then, cannot mean that God will save one who refuses to be saved. So we cannot always pray for others with the same assurance as we pray for ourselves, for we have not control of their wills, as we have of our own. But sometimes the assurance may come from the Holy Spirit that a friend is going to

yield, just as evangelists often have assurances in prayer that certain campaigns will result in great spiritual victory. Keep on praying; keep on trusting that God will do every possible thing to win your friend's love; let him see in you a peace and joy and confidence that will attract and win him. There will probably still be seasons of intense, passionate intercessory prayer, and in some such season you may receive the assurance that your friend is about to yield to the Saviour. Don't say or think that the case is "hopeless." There are no such cases. Christ can reach and save and forgive and bless "whosoever will."

187. What Is Meant by Keeping the Sabbath Day Holy? After One Has Gone to Church, What Else Is Required and What in the Line of Pleasure Is Permissible?

Paul, who apparently had to answer many questions concerning Sabbath observance at a time when legalists were urging the most rigid conformity with the strict Jewish laws on the subject, wrote: "Let no man judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of . . . the Sabbath days" (Col. 2:16). When the question of the obligation of the Gentile converts in the new church to observe the forms of the old religion was discussed by the apostles in council for the first time, the whole subject of legalism was simplified in two verses (see Acts 15:28, 29). Jesus himself rebuked the old slavish restrictions which were so prominent a part of the teachings of the Scribes and Pharisees, and

showed them that the Sabbath was made for man, meaning that it was designed for our common humanity and for the doing of those acts which would conduce in largest measure to the general good. An act which is not in itself sinful but rather commendable, such as a deed of kindness, of charity, of urgent help and even of absolutely indispensable labor (which if left unattended too might entail loss or suffering), might thus not only be regarded as justifiable on the Sabbath but even as a duty. In general, the observance of the day may be summed up in rest and worship. No labor that can be done on other days should be performed on the Sabbath, but it is not to be a day devoted to social pleasure or amusement. It is the Lord's day, and we ought to spend it in a manner becoming its character. The question of visiting must be one for the individual conscience. There may be visits that come within the range of Sunday proprieties. Even the rigid Jews were permitted a "Sabbath day's journey," presumably for recreation and exercise, and we cannot believe that they shut off all social intercourse. There is a wide difference, however, between such happenings and the carrying out of a deliberate purpose of spending a portion of the day on social calls.

The gravest danger that confronts Christian parents in regard to Sunday conduct is that by a too strict regulation they will make the day actually distasteful to the children. The day should be literally happy, and any plan that tends to make the children gloomy and dissatisfied does more harm than good. Story-telling is always a delight to children. They like to hear a good book read aloud. Get them to take turns in

reading aloud. Winter and summer alike, long walks are in order, and always delightful. Do not be afraid to let them run and laugh. Explain to them that it is best not to indulge in games because the habit of playing games on Sunday is coming to be a real national peril, and is taking people away from God and the church. Provide some refreshments for them; let them help in preparing them. There could be no harm in carrying the refreshments on their walk and eating them at the walk's end. Show them how they can find God in nature. Make them feel that Christ is the "God of the open air," and that he loves health and happiness. In such an atmosphere they will grow to love Bible talks and will come to realize that Christ is a delightful friend and Sunday a delightful day. Give them something to do. If they can take flowers or fruit to the sick or poor, or go to sing for shut-ins or at some afternoon service, they will find the day still fuller of blessing.

188. How Should the Sabbath Be Spent in a Section Where There Are No Church Privileges?

It should be spent in prayer to God, in praise and in meditation on his Word. This is to be done, where possible, either in the privacy of one's own apartment, in the family, or in the assembly of the faithful. Where public worship in the sanctuary is not practicable, its substitute is to be found in the assembling of a few in the home and there reading and expounding the Scriptures, first asking a blessing on the effort. There are in isolated parts of this great country many

sections without church buildings. Little gatherings of friends and neighbors are held for worship and often a sermon by some devout minister of the Gospel is read aloud by some one present to the edification of all. All labor should be set aside and everything that will distract the mind from the sacred duties of the day. The children, too, should not be forgotten. Their instruction in the Word is an essential part of the duties of the Sabbath.

189. Does a Christian Always Feel the Same as to His Salvation and Its Fruits?

Suppose we begin, in trying to find an answer for this problem—which could be matched in countless lives—by quoting these words from Paul: “God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (II Cor. 9:8). That’s comforting, isn’t it? Whatever our problems are, then, we are not going to worry about them, because God’s grace is so abundant. Almost every difficulty in life is solved by just getting a little more of God’s grace. He is going to take away your anxiety, and make you happy; you can count on him for that. But not even perfect Christians “feel” the same all the time. Another word for feeling is *emotion*, and that very word implies motion, change, fluctuation. Our feelings are affected by many things—health, sleep (or the lack of it), conditions of the air, etc. In bad health, and, especially in cases where nerves are overstrained and the brain overwearied, there is very likely to be depression and oversensitiveness. Now let us analyze and see what makes us Christians. You hate

sin; you love God; you wish every one well; you long that others shall love God's Word. Now thank God for all the grace he has given you, and ask him for more. Read his wonderful promises of cleansing and believe he means them for you. Then, disregarding your feelings and living actively for others, keep on believing that he keeps his promises for you, moment by moment (see Ezek. 36:25-27; II Cor. 7:1; I Thess. 5:23, 24).

190. How Can We Overcome Fear as to Our Salvation?

Many good people are troubled by fears and self-accusations which come from own imaginings or from the tempter, rather than from the Holy Spirit. It may be some comfort to know that there are many cases where sensitive souls have suffered great torment because of similar accusations and fears. Do you not see, in the first place, that these feelings cannot be reproofs from God, because if they were they would be definite and emphatic? When God accuses us of anything we know exactly what he means. He does not tease and perplex us by talking in riddles and in enigmas. Jesus said: "My sheep know my voice." It is one of the offices of the Holy Spirit to "convict," but conviction is a plain, definite thing that tells us when we have done wrong and just what the wrong is. What God regards is the motive of our act, and it is very plain from your letter that at every step you meant to do the right thing. All you need to do now in order to have peace is to stop doubting God and begin to trust him. Remember that what saves you fully is not anything that you do or promise, but what

God has done in the gift of his Son and what he has promised in his Word. Do not grieve God any longer by distrusting him and wondering whether or not he is kind. You would feel deeply grieved if your children doubted and feared you in this way. Even the strange, evil thoughts which come to you do not condemn you because they are hateful to you and you try to banish them. Wesley said: "I cannot prevent the birds from flying over my head, but I can prevent them from building nests in my hair." So we cannot prevent evil thoughts coming to us, but we can drive them away as we look to God for speedy deliverance. It is not necessary to "go forward" before you can receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. No! Nothing is necessary except to believe at once that God does give us this gracious gift, "for the promise is unto you and unto your children and unto all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). Read the wonderful promises for cleansing and for the filling with the Holy Spirit: Ezek. 36:25-27; Zech. 13:1; II Cor. 7:1; Rom. 6 (the whole chapter); Heb. 10:1-23; I Thess. 5:23, 24; and Heb. 13:20, 21. Take your stand firmly upon these and other promises, believe that God meant them for you, and refuse any longer to live in fear and distress. He is *abundantly able* to save and will save "to the uttermost."

Do you remember that the first word of the angel who announced Christ's coming to the shepherds was "Fear not"? You are being tormented with fear. This fear is the cause of your spiritual distress. You must deal with yourself just as you would deal with a child who is afraid of ghosts. Tell him there are

no ghosts; there is nothing to be afraid of. Now the thing that torments you is just as untrue as the child's thoughts about ghosts. Your ghost is the thought that God is not kind. This is not true. He is so kind that he sent Christ to save you. Since he did so, why should you fear and doubt any longer? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" is just as true for you as it was true for the Philippian jailer and for the millions more who have tested it. But if you will not believe, if you insist on fearing instead, you will continue to live in torment. Do not wait for a "right feeling." That cannot come till you stop fearing and begin to trust. Perhaps you do think of yourself too much. Fix your eyes on Christ. Realize his great love and power, and remember that he loves you just as much as he loves anybody. He surely will save you. Take him by faith as your Saviour. Begin to live for others. Spend what strength you have in service for others, and he will give you more (Isa. 40:29-31).

191. Can a True Christian Wilfully Sin?

This question usually revolves about the passage: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (I John 3:9). As we have stated many times the whole volume of Scripture must be taken together in answering any question. Now the whole message of the Bible seems to be built upon the assumption that it is possible for any one to sin. The temptation of Christ seems to imply even he *could* have yielded; otherwise temptation would have no meaning. Paul said he was con-

scious of the possibility of becoming "a castaway" (I Cor. 9:27). While this passage from John is extremely difficult, we may, perhaps, interpret it in this way—that while a person is loving God he cannot sin. The love must drop out of his consciousness first. Righteousness means the desire and effort to obey God; so that while we are loving him we are not sinning. Sin is "a wilful transgression of a known law"; and God does not account an act sinful when we do it believing that it has his approval. The way to keep from sinning is to keep this love for God ever present in our consciousness. While we have it our deeds will not be sinful. But we may at any time put it away, or allow ourselves to lose it, and then we shall yield to sin. A wilful sin means that one sins, saying: "I know that God does not wish me to do this, but I am going to do it." And certainly it is not an extravagance of language to say that while one is conscious of loving God he cannot say that.

192. Is It True that the Closer We Live to God the More Trouble He Sends Us?

We think that God's treatment of his children is directed to their development. If he sees that trouble and suffering will lead to that end he will administer them; if prosperity will best promote development he will send that. The same difference is made by judicious parents and teachers in the treatment of children. Some children develop better by kindness than by severity, while others would make no progress if they were not treated severely.

193. Is Uncharitableness Compatible with Christianity?

No one should go into the business of judging others. But a Christian who is unkind and cross is certainly an anomalous creature. If the New Testament teaches anything it teaches that the fruit of the religion of Jesus is kindness, charity, friendliness, neighborliness, love. Love is not incompatible with sternness and an earnest opposition to everything that is wrong. But the real Christian ought to convince every one who knows him that his heart is tender and kind. We ought, however, to recognize the fact that often persons with thoroughly kind hearts have a gruff and rugged exterior and manner. Also, intense pain, long-continued sickness, overstrained or disordered nerves will sometimes make an individual appear impatient who might otherwise be most patient. We ought to recognize these differences of temperament and the unusual strain put by circumstances upon certain souls. We should believe and experience and teach that the grace of God is great enough to remove all petulance and unkindness from the soul, but while advocating and urging this belief we should ourselves be most patient with those whose faith has not yet grasped the truth that complete deliverance from unpleasant tempers is possible.

194. How Can We Reconcile the Doctrine of Good Works as Taught by James with That of St. Paul?

There is an apparent contradiction between Rom. 3:28, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified

by faith without the deeds of the law," and James 2: 24, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith alone." In order to harmonize the apparently opposing doctrines it is to be remembered that the two apostles were writing for two different classes of readers, both of whom were liable to run to extremes. Paul wished his hearers to understand that good works did not avail to save a man whose heart had not been changed. It was through his faith in Christ that he was accepted and that he could not earn salvation. James, on the other hand, was writing for people who were disposed to do no good works at all, but to rest contented with their own salvation, claiming that faith was sufficient. He told them that such faith did not avail. Faith without works was dead—was in fact no faith at all. The explanation which reconciles the two is that true faith always leads to good works, and if there are no good works we are justified in inferring that the faith is not genuine.

195. What Do the Scriptures Teach Us of Good Works?

As with all things that are good, Christ was an example to us in good works (John 10: 32; Acts 10: 38). Good works called good fruits, fruits meet for repentance, fruits of righteousness and works and labors of love (James 3: 17; Matt. 3: 8; Phi. 1: 11; Heb. 6: 10) are by Jesus Christ wrought by God in us to the glory and praise of God (Phi. 1: 11; Isa. 26: 12). The Scriptures are designed to lead us to do them in Christ's name, but only they who abide in Christ can perform them (II Tim. 3: 16, 17; Col. 3: 17; John 15: 4, 5). Though heavenly wisdom is full of good

works, justification and salvation are not attainable through them (James 3:17; Rom. 3:20; Eph. 2:8, 9; II Tim. 1:9). Saints created in Christ unto good works and exhorted to put them on are full of and zealous of them (Eph. 2:10; Col. 3:12-14; Acts 9:36; Tit. 2:14). They should not only be so but should be rich, stablished, fruitful and perfect in them, ready and prepared unto all of them which they are to manifest with meekness and to which they are to provoke each other without ostentation (I Tim. 6:18; II Thess. 2:17; Col. 1:10; Heb. 13:21; II Cor. 9:8; Tit. 3:1; Heb. 10:24; Matt. 6:1-18). God will remember these good works which shall be brought into the judgment and there will be an evidence of faith (Neh. 13:14; Eccles. 12:14; Matt. 25:34-40).

196. How Much of the Lord's Work Ought a Christian to Do—One Who Has Home Duties to Attend to?

God expects his people to give their lives unreservedly and absolutely to his service. Whether one is at work in the home or in the church, there should be the consciousness that the work is being done for God. "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17). The question of how much time should be given to God's service in the home and how much to God's service in church and community must be settled in the individual conscience. "Duties *never* conflict." There is always one thing to do which is the thing God wants done at that particular time. It is probably true that a mother's first duty is to her home, though there are exceptional cases in which a woman may be called to leave her

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home for broader work, and every mother must cultivate a deep interest in the needs and sufferings of those outside the home circle and do all she can to relieve them. But women who are kept close at home should not feel that their lives are being wasted. They are training lives which may bless multitudes. Susanna Wesley was a true mother and homemaker, doing her work there and giving to the church and the world two great spiritual leaders. Home must be kept bright, neat, happy, cheerful, worshipful. Church and community duties which unfit women for their work at home, or take them too much away from their children, should not be undertaken.

197. What Is the Best Way to Worship the Lord?

The best worship is a faithful, loyal, adoring, prayerful service; an upright, reverent walk before men, "bringing forth fruits of righteousness" for his glory. The Samaritan woman asked the same question of Christ, and you will find his answer in John 4:21-24.

198. How Can We Reconcile the Widely Differing Views of Equally Well-meaning Christians?

In the passage, John 7:17, "If any man will do his will he shall know the doctrine," Jesus is speaking simply of the question of the divine source of his teaching. He was constantly repeating the assertion made in the preceding verse: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." The Jews thought he spoke with his own human authority; he asserted that

his authority came from God. And he told them that the reason they could not perceive this was the sinful stubbornness of their hearts. "If you were really willing to do God's will," he told them, "you would know that my teaching comes from him." It is this fact that makes faith in Christ a fair spiritual test; those who reject him are not really willing to obey God; those who are really on the lookout for God's guidance and who will actually submit their wills to him will learn the truth about Jesus. While not implied in this particular verse, the question involves another problem, which is why "equally well-meaning Christians" differ so widely on religious matters, when the promises of divine guidance are so numerous and so emphatic. One would reasonably think, if God promises to guide every one who will allow him to do so, that all who do yield themselves to him would see everything alike. Briefly, we may say that most of the things Christians differ about are not essential. God does promise to guide in vital matters, but not in non-essentials. Read Paul's statements about the charity Christian believers ought to manifest toward one another concerning matters about which they differ. Then, too, many people think they disagree concerning things about which they really do agree. They all see limited parts of one great truth, like the two knights who, coming up to an inn from different directions, fell into a dispute as to whether the shield hanging before it was of silver or gold. They began to fight, and in the struggle reversed their positions, whereupon each saw that both had been right, the shield being gold on one side and silver on the other. Not only our points of view but our mental capabili-

ties differ widely; some can understand a specific truth or fact, others cannot. We must be tolerant and charitable, believing that God is blessing and leading those who differ from us as well as those who agree with us. But there are certain great vital principles, upon which all Christians can and do agree.

199. How Can a Christian Escape the Criticism of Those Who Do Not Agree with His Methods?

Christians need not expect to escape unjust criticism at times. There are good, well-meaning people who take the narrow view, and would compel all Christians to be of one type—their type, of course—and to believe precisely what they believe and worship in all respects as they themselves worship. This is altogether wrong. You may remember what Jesus said to some of these faultfinding folk who desired him to rebuke an independent worker (see Mark 9: 40). Our heavenly Father looks at the hearts of men and regards their inmost thoughts and desires as of far greater consequence than outward forms and ceremonies. Moses had trouble in his time with the formalists, and see how he answered them (see Num. 11: 26); and Paul, in the midst of his great apostolic missionary work, had occasion to rebuke some of his followers whose overzeal led them to criticise a few good people who did not choose to copy their methods, but struck out a path for themselves (see Phil. 1: 15-18). If you go on energetically doing your best in a humble way, and asking divine guidance daily, you can afford to overlook the critics. Keep in constant touch with your church and get on friendly terms with

your fellow members. Try hard to put aside all feeling against individuals, no matter what their attitude has been in the past. We think you might cultivate the social side of church membership to advantage. One who holds aloof certainly misses much in the way of Christian fellowship and sociability.

200. What Shall I Do to Become the Good Christian Worker I Used to Be?

“I am not as good a Christian or worker as I used to be,” is a complaint often heard. Thousands of professing Christians could make this same complaint. Removal to a new home, the death of consecrated Christian friends who encouraged and guided us in other years, gradual yielding to the influence and pressure of other interests and desires—these are among the countless causes of inactivity and unconcern on the part of those who were once zealous Christian workers. Further, one’s views or one’s tastes may change with passing years, and the tasks one once delighted in may not be so congenial as before. Or, more seriously, one’s faith in some of the details of the creeds of earlier years may have been weakened, and this weakened faith has caused a hesitancy about trying to guide others. What shall be done? In the first place we must come resolutely back to Christ. Whatever may have happened to our old faith we are still sure that he is the Master of our souls. We must confess our shortcomings, ask his forgiveness, and ask him to set us at work again. We must be strenuous and uncompromising in making right whatever wrongs have crept into our lives during these years of neglect. He will freely forgive. He will give us a new vision

of himself, a new vision of old truths. He will show us what he wants us to do now. Opportunities will open—it may be to take up the very tasks we laid down; it may be to take up new tasks more in line with our present interests. But we must begin *at once* to do some definite thing for Christ, and when that is done another task will surely be at hand. We dare not delay another hour to return to our fidelity and our zeal. We must think not only of Christ's disappointment during the faithless years and of the loss to our own lives, but of the burdens we might have lifted, the heartaches and tears we might have prevented, of all the people who have had sad hours or wrong hours that we might have saved them from, or who are wrong now because we were unfaithful. We dare not add another moment to those unfaithful years.

201. Can One Be Saved and Yet Be Unkind?

Salvation by faith does not release a Christian from the duty of being kind. That is a dreadfully distorted view which some people appear to take. Our faith in Christ should be a faith that brings a cleansing from unkindness, selfishness and impatience, and that fills the heart full of love. Among the fruits of the Spirit Paul names "love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness." The wonderful 13th chapter of I Corinthians gives a vivid picture of what a Christian's life among others should be. As for overwork and weariness, it is perfectly true that they may so strain our mental and nervous system as to put it into an abnormal condition. In our rapid, high-tension American life this condition is very common and we should do all in our power to avoid it. God's command to rest is as

definite as his command to work. Between our work times we must take what rest we can, and then trust God to keep us sweet and patient and kind during the hard hours of work.

202. What Cure Is There for One Living Under a Cloud of Spiritual Doubt?

Suppose you had lost your sleep for two or three nights. This would put your brain into a thoroughly abnormal condition. You would probably have all sorts of doubts and fear and misgivings, and what you would need to rid yourself of these would be not prayer but sleep. God made your body according to certain laws, and to keep it in correct working order you must conform to these laws. If you break the laws, even innocently, your first religious duty is to repair the physical damage. If our brains are overstrained or the delicate nervous system is overstrained or deranged in any way our brains will manufacture queer and abnormal and distressing thoughts and feelings. First of all insist upon getting well. You have faith enough in Christ to tell him simply and frankly that you cannot figure these things out in your present state, and ask him to make it possible for you to rest. Then as your mind and nerves grow stronger associate with the most spiritually minded people you can find; attend their religious services. Accept whatever of their teaching you can without mental effort and leave the rest till you get enough stronger to consider it. Do the same with your Bible reading. Accept what is plain and easy and simple, and leave the difficult passages till you are better. Above all, remember that of all kind and gentle and sympathetic friends Jesus is the best.

He wants to make you well; he wants to drive away the clouds. Just let him be the friend he wants to be, and his light will drive the darkness away (see II Cor. 4:6).

203. How Can One Have Harmony Between One's Higher and Lower Selves?

David prayed a beautiful prayer in the 11th verse of the 86th Psalm: "Unite my heart to fear thy name." Charles Wesley prays for

*"A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love divine;
Perfect and right and pure and good,
A copy, Lord, of thine."*

Scripture promises for the cleansing of the heart from sin are numerous and positive. But the fact remains that even after the heart has been cleansed by the power of the Holy Spirit a struggle goes on with one's lower or animal nature. The heart itself, that is, the will and the affections, may be united and consistent, but the body has tendencies away from the right. So long as life lasts there will be this battle between the body and the soul, the battle described in Paul's strenuous words in I Cor. 9:27 (American Version): "I buffet my body and bring it into bondage." But the struggle with the bodily impulses need not disturb our Christian peace. It is different from the struggle James speaks about in his reference to the "two-souled man." This is a good translation of his phrase, "double-minded man." That is a terrible and grievous situation, in which a man's inmost soul is

divided, part set on the good and part set on the evil. But when we receive the blessing of a "united heart," when we have what Jesus called the "single eye," then we may set ourselves jubilantly to face the struggle with all the forces that would oppose us, including our own physical nature, knowing that we shall be constantly "more than conquerors through him that loved us."

204. Does a Christian Ever Have Evil Desires?

The word "desires" hardly covers the problem. It deals not so much with desires as with the question of love or good feeling toward another, or the lack of such good feeling. In discussing these problems it helps us to remember Jesus' summary of the law, "Thou shalt love God; thou shalt love thy neighbor," and Paul's statement, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Whenever we have an unloving or unkind feeling toward another we have sinned. Whenever we are indifferent as to whether or not an act pleases God, particularly when we persist in an action after we know it to be displeasing to God, we have sinned. The Scriptures teach very clearly that God, through Christ, provides a grace which will keep our hearts kind and loving all the time and will keep alive there the sense of our love to God. Of course, when another commits an act that is hurtful to ourselves or to others, there can be displeasure at the act, there can even be indignation; but in the perfect Christian the very displeasure or indignation would be connected in some way with love. This was the case with the anger of Jesus; he was angry that people were trying to thwart his works of love. But, as stated before, there is sin

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the moment one persists in an action while believing that it is displeasing to God. A person may be a Christian and still have such lapses, but he may also press on to a higher Christian state in which the soul is so filled with love that such lapses do not occur.

205. Must a Converted Person Give Up the Use of Tobacco?

If you have come to the conclusion that you ought to give up the use of tobacco it is your duty to do so. You remember the principle laid down by the apostle Paul for similar cases: "There is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth a thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean" (Rom. 14:14). The serious feature, according to this rule, is not the use of tobacco, but is that you are doing something you believe you ought not to do. A Christian who is convinced that a certain thing is wrong ought immediately to abandon it, without any question as to what the penalty of wrongdoing is. You will suffer, but is it not worth suffering to put yourself right with God? You may be sure that if you ask God for strength it will be given you. There are multitudes of men who have been delivered from rum, tobacco and other enslaving habits who could tell you that an honest, sincere, persistent effort made in God's strength is sure to be successful.

206. Can a Person Be a Christian and Use Liquor Moderately?

Liquor, like everything else in this world, poisons included, has its uses, but these are mainly medical. It is not an article of food nor a necessity, and there

is no excuse for the indulgence of a habit which, even in its most temperate aspect, is pernicious, morally and physically, like all other sinful indulgences. The Bible admonishes us to avoid all such practises, and especially to avoid drink. The "temperate drinker," who believes he is doing no wrong in tampering lightly with this great evil, should remember that he is incurring a double responsibility—risking the wreck of his own soul and body, and also leading others by his bad example to a like fate (see Cor. 8:9-13 and 10:21, 31, 32; Rom. 14:21; Matt. 18:6, 7, and other passages).

207. How Are We to Drive Away Harrowing Thoughts of Our Past Misdeeds?

Even David had these troubles. Does he not say in Ps. 51:3: "My sin is ever before me"? But God has promised to forgive our sins, and we must try to do the same. It should not be hard to believe that he forgives our sins when he has stated so often and so emphatically that he will do so: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions" (Isa. 43:25); "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isa. 1:18); "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103:12). After you have trusted Christ to forgive your sins you should give yourself so earnestly and energetically to service for others in his name that you will have little time to think about the past. Some converts make a mistake in dwelling too much on past sins in telling about their redemption. It is sometimes helpful to others to tell of our sins in testifying to God's pardon, but we must be careful not

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to do it too much. As for responsibility for our thoughts, we have quoted a number of times Wesley's saying: "I cannot prevent the birds from flying over my head, but I can prevent them from building nests in my hair." Thoughts of evil are suggested to us, but we can repel them by our will power, helped by the grace of God.

208. What Was the Origin of the Mite Box?

The mite box is supposed to have had its origin in the suggestion furnished in the New Testament story of the widow's mite (Mark 12:42). A mite was equal to about half a mill; hence the idea of furnishing a receptacle for offerings of the smallest denomination. Just when mite boxes were first used is unknown.

209. On What Scale Should We Give to the Lord's Work?

There is no definite scale laid down in the Gospels for our gifts toward the Lord's work, although there are various passages on the subject. Many good people even today adhere to the tithing system and find satisfaction in it, while others, who give "according as God has prospered them," find that where love stimulates their generosity their gifts are blessed to themselves and others. If we lavish all our prosperity on ourselves and our families, leaving little or nothing for the Lord's work, we are "robbing God." It is well, therefore, to make him a partner in all our increase, and a sharer in all our benefits. Since everything we have comes from his hands, we should not hesitate to acknowledge it by a generous return. We know of several worthy people who systematically plan to devote

a good share of their income to the church, to missions, to charities, and to various philanthropies. One of these friends carries a list of some sixteen missionaries in foreign fields, whom he supports, and with whom he is in more or less regular correspondence. Nor does he let other good causes suffer, although the one dearest to his heart—the spread of the Gospel—may receive the largest share. Another person devoted a large percentage of the profits of an immense business to the support of a chain of home missions. He did not neglect church work or other causes, and prosperity always stood by his side. We believe in systematic giving, however much or little may be our gift, and whatever we give let it be done without ostentation, but modestly and gladly, and it will not fail to bring a blessing.

210. Is It Possible for a Christian to Be Deeply Interested in Some Earthly Work and Ambition, Music for Instance, and to Be Equally Interested in Personal Work for Souls?

It is not at all likely that the Master wishes you to give up your music. The history of Christianity and the history of music are closely intertwined. In fact, it is hard to conceive what Christianity would have been without music. Many a soul has been won to Christ by the singing of a hymn. And even instrumental music at the hands of Spirit-filled performers may bring positive spiritual blessing. God has special need of consecrated masters of music now for two specific tasks—to oppose the tendency to make music contribute to

the baser instincts, and to raise the standard of music used in Christian work. This does not mean that a Christian musician should be interested only in what is called sacred music. The best secular compositions, vocal and instrumental, may be studied and rendered. But for the Christian there will always be the thought of God in his work and the desire that souls shall be spiritually blest. Be sure to think of Christ as a great Friend rather than a great taskmaster. Get on the closest possible terms with him, asking him to cleanse your heart and fill you with his Spirit, and make you feel his anxiety that people shall be saved and blest. Then he will show you how to use his gift to help forward his work.

211. What Pleasures Must One Sacrifice in Joining a Church?

God does not ask us to make sacrifice for its own sake. When he asks us to give anything up, it is because he knows it would be harmful to us to keep it. In all our thoughts about God we must hold with a firm grip the great fundamental truth that he loves us. We cannot think rightly or feel comfortable without starting here. Because he loves us he wants us to be happy. He does not want to take away our happiness, but to give us more. And he knows that we can be happy only as we love and serve him. He really asks us to give up nothing, except to give ourselves to him. When we realize that we belong to him we also realize that certain things harm us, and that certain other things may have a harmful influence upon others. We are living for him, and for the people for whom his Son died. All these questions settle themselves quite

easily then. Wholesome athletics make our bodies stronger to do his work. But we know that dancing has injured the moral and spiritual life of many, and that the great majority of plays have objectionable and harmful features. So the sacrifices that seemed hard at first are seen to be really not hard at all, and we find more happiness in the consciousness that we are pleasing and helping him than we could ever have found in any form of self-indulgence.

212. Is It Right to Accept Saloon Money for Church Work?

When Christian institutions accept ill-gotten wealth for any purpose, knowing how such means have been obtained, they give quiet sanction to the crime. The early Christians were forbidden to eat the flesh of offerings made to idols; then how much should Christians abstain from money obtained as the price of crime. Christianity would better die than become a partner of sin and an abettor of distress. No doubt every dollar the saloonkeeper offers is blood money taken from the mouths of starving women and children.

213. Law and Grace—Difference Between.

The clear and definite teaching of the Scripture is "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Divested of all theological phrases, the way of salvation is pointed out in these plain words. Man, as a sinner, is under condemnation by the law; but the Gospel opens the way to pardon and to rehabilitation in righteousness. Salvation is of God's free grace and comes through no merit of our own. Christ has satis-

fied the law and paid the penalty in our behalf. He is to be accepted as Saviour, Atoner, Advocate, Counsellor, Friend. Not in the strength of our own righteousness, but with his righteousness covering our imperfections, and his shed blood washing away our sins and his divine intercession pleading for our forgiveness, we place our whole life, here and hereafter, unreservedly in his hands. We must first confess our sins with sincere repentance, and then determine, with his help, to forsake sin hereafter. If we have wronged any one we must show the sincerity of our repentance by righting the wrong. We must ask help to overcome all assailing doubts and to have our faith strengthened daily. We have his assurance that such prayers will never be unanswered. In all of this process there is nothing concerning works. We must ask help to overcome all assailing doubts and to have our faith strengthened daily. We have his assurance that such prayers will never be unanswered. In all this process, there is nothing concerning works. If men were saved by virtue of their works, what would become of those who, sunk in the lowest depths of sin, have no works to plead for them? Yet he "saves to the uttermost." He has already fulfilled the law and done all the works needful for our salvation, and it only remains for us to accept his sacrifice and rejoice that Jesus has "tasted death for every man," and that he died for us. Regeneration follows conversion, and the regenerated heart, in grateful and glad obedience, brings forth those fruits of the Spirit that are described in Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 5:9; James 3:17, 18; Phil. 1:11. They are the things that make the life rich and abundant, in contrast with the bar-

ren and unproductive nature of the unregenerated life. Thus fruit (or works) logically follow, for it is inevitable that a living faith must be productive; hence our faith is literally known by the works we do in token of the love that gave us as a free gift that new and larger freedom which otherwise we could never have attained (see Rom. 8:2; Gal. 5:1; Rom. 6:18; John 8:32, 36).

214. At What Date and What Season of the Year Was the Saviour Born?

According to the leading modern authorities, and many others of former times, the birth of Christ took place four years before the opening of what is known as the Christian era. Dionysius Exiguus, a monk who made the calculations upon which the Christian calendar is based, lived in 526 A. D., and it has long been conceded that he erred to the extent of four years in fixing the date of the Nativity. The date, however, is unimportant, as far as it affects Christ's mission or character, although it has been a subject of discussion for centuries. There was no agreement as to the date, in the primitive Christian Church, nor as to the season. Clement of Alexandria regarded the 20th of May as the date of the Nativity, others the 20th of April. Modern chronologists differ, some holding it probable that either June or July (when the fields are parched from want of rain) was the time; Lightfoot names September; Lardner and Newcomb, October; Strong, August; Andrews and many others between the middle of December, 749, and the middle of January, 750 (dating after the founding of Rome). Church historians and popular tradition have fixed on December 25. One

clue is found in the fact that Zacharias was officiating in the Temple when the angel announced to him the future birth of his son, John the Baptist. It is known that the course of Abia, to which Zacharias belonged, was serving in the Temple in October of that year. Another clue is in the fact of the shepherds being in the fields, which was more likely to occur in December than in June, which latter is the alternative month.

JESUS' LIFE AND DEATH

215. Is There Any Authentic Portrait of Christ in Existence?

Perhaps the oldest and supposedly the most authentic is a cameo, said to have been cut in the reign of Tiberius, but it may not now be in existence. The Christs of the great artists are the highest ideal to which human art can attain. There is the divinely noble yet sad Christ of Ary Scheffer; the placid Christ of Raphael; the strenuous Christ of Da Vinci; the suffering, thorn-crowned Christs of Guido Reni, Quentin Matsys, Rembrandt, Titian, Correggio and Albert Dürer; the ascetic Christ of Munkacsy, and the later presentations of the Dutch, French, Spanish and English schools. Each artist has given to the world his highest conception according to the standards of his nation. But the real face of the Saviour, glorious with its fulness of power and majesty, yet inexpressibly tender with love and sympathy, has eluded them all. Isaiah (53:2) gave a prophetic glimpse of him that was to come.

216. Why Do the Artists Represent Jesus and His Disciples in a Sitting Posture at the Institution of the Lord's Supper When All Sacred Writers Say it Was Customary in Those Days to Recline at the Table?

Artistic conceptions have certainly varied greatly in the treatment of this subject. Some painters have

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apparently discarded Oriental forms and customs, in order to produce a picture that would be less strange, yet no less impressive in the eyes of their own countrymen. A few, like Tissot, have adhered closely to the Eastern standards. Italian painters have given us the Last Supper as a classic Italian scene, and German, Dutch and English artists have each given their own national interpretation of the subject. They painted for their own time and their own people, and unless they had had the advantage of travel and study in the Orient they could not have done otherwise. Strict accuracy was apparently held as of less importance than a noble and beautiful ideal.

217. Was Jesus as a Babe Like an Ordinary Babe, or Did He Know All Things?

It is difficult if not impossible to comprehend the union of the divine and the human in Christ's nature. He could not have been an ordinary babe, as the divine nature must have been potent in him even in infancy. But that he knew all things in the sense of secular knowledge cannot be believed. In fact Luke says explicitly (Luke 2:52) that he increased in wisdom. Even after he commenced his ministry he admitted that he did not know all things (Mark 13:32). His divinity must have been restricted by its fleshly environment.

218. What Evidence Is There Outside of the Bible of the Existence of Jesus Christ?

A number of the most eminent historians, both Jewish and Roman, mention Jesus in their writings. Tacitus, who lived in the first century, wrote "this

sect (of Christians) came from Judea and was founded by Jesus Christ, who was put to the death of the Cross." Suetonius, a Roman historian, who wrote the lives of the Cæsars, mentions the sect "under one Christus." This writer, although an enemy to Christianity, still recognized it. Lucan, who lived near the close of the first century, mentions the Christians and describes their belief. He tells us "of all the great men Judea has brought forth, their crucified Master exceeds in his philosophy and teaching all before him." A magnificent tribute from a heathen! Josephus, the greatest of Jewish historians, writing about the middle of the first century, says: "Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man—if it be lawful to call him a man—for he was a doer of many wonderful works, a teacher of such men as received the truth." He further relates his preaching, trial, condemnation, crucifixion and resurrection, and refers to the prophecies concerning him as having been fulfilled in all these matters. Thus is established, outside of Sacred Writ, the existence of Jesus on earth.

219. In What Sense Can Jesus Be Regarded as Descended from David?

You will notice that there is a divergence in the lists of his ancestors, as given by Matthew and Luke. Matthew gives Joseph's father as Jacob (Matt. 1:16). Luke says (Luke 3:23) his father was Heli. We cannot think that either was mistaken. It is suggested with some plausibility that Heli was Mary's father, and Joseph was really his son-in-law, not his son. The Jews followed the genealogy in the male line, which may account for Joseph's name being inserted instead

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of Mary's. If that is the explanation it is Mary's ancestry which Luke gives. Her accompanying Joseph to Bethlehem to be counted seems to imply that, like Joseph, she could claim descent from David.

220. What Text of Scripture May Be Presented as the Most Definite and Powerful Assertion of the Deity of Christ?

In John 10:30 Christ says: "I and my Father are one." This is his own unqualified assertion of his oneness with the Father. He also prayed to the Father in these words: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine ownself with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). St. John, in his Gospel, opens his record of Christ with words used by Moses in introducing God upon the scene. "In the beginning God," says Moses. "In the beginning was the Word," says John, and adds: "And the Word was with God, and the Word was God." We identify this Word as Christ as we read John 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh." The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews declares that God made the worlds through his Son and that to the Son he saith: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." And again: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the work of thy hands." Paul, in writing to the Romans, speaks of Christ, "who is over all, God blessed forever."

221. How Was Jesus' Childhood Spent?

All we know of the childhood of Jesus is what the Scripture relates. There are, however, various traditional writings on the subject, more or less apocryphal,

which have been preserved, but to these little importance is attached. The life at Nazareth, though quiet and obscure and passed over in a few lines by the evangelists, was unquestionably a life of preparation for the great work to follow. While Jesus "must have been at all times marked out by his higher spiritual nature," writes Dr. Geikie, "yet in his human nature there must have been the same gradual development as in other men, otherwise they would not have felt the wonder at him which they afterward evinced. Year after year passed and still found him at his daily toil, because his hour had not yet come." It is in various ways made evident that, even in childhood, he had distinct convictions of his divine nature, and that these grew with the years, until the time was ripe for beginning his public ministry.

222. Were the Jews, or Were the Romans, Responsible for Christ's Death?

At that particular time the Jews were not allowed to inflict the death penalty. Afterward, as in the case of Stephen, they did inflict it, and they carried it out by stoning. Their responsibility, however, is undoubted. Pilate did not want to kill Jesus. The Jews placed Pilate in a technical difficulty by denouncing Jesus as a rival to Cæsar. If he had refused to punish him the Jews would, as they covertly threatened, have denounced him to Cæsar. He could easily have cleared himself of such a charge, but there were other matters in his career which would not so well have borne investigation, and these would naturally have been cited if the Jews had impeached him. Pilate consented to the execution reluctantly under Jewish pressure,

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and therefore, though the actual execution was conducted by Romans, the Jews were responsible.

223. Is There Any Way of Reconciling an Apparent Discrepancy in the Narratives of the Evangelists as to the Thieves at the Crucifixion, Matthew and Mark Speaking of Both Reviling Christ, While Luke Speaks of One Reproving the Other for Doing It?

Augustine and others who have dealt with the subject (for the difficulty was considered centuries ago) contend that the penitent thief did not revile Christ. They think that Matthew and Mark were in the habit of using the plural form of a word where the singular was the correct form, and they refer to other instances of the habit. Matt. 26:8; Mark 14:4 compared with John 12:4 is one of them. On the other hand, it may have been that both thieves reviled Christ, but the spectacle of magnanimity and patient suffering so affected one of them, as he drew near death, as to produce a penitent frame of mind. We may infer also, from the form in which he presented his petition, that he must have previously had some instruction either from Christ or his disciples, which had remained in his memory without, until his dying hour, affecting his heart or life.

224. Who Was Regarded by the Lord as His Foremost Disciple?

John was called the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23, 21:7 and 21:20). The Saviour commended Mary to the keeping of John, while he hung

on the cross (see John 19:26, 27). Peter, however, by many is regarded as having been the leading spirit of the band.

225. Did Jesus Gain by Experience?

In becoming man Christ voluntarily subjected himself to certain human limitations. He was made in all things like unto his brethren and yet without sin. Luke explicitly states (2:52) that he increased in wisdom. He took upon himself the human form and with it the conditions of its life, among which would be the need of being educated like other boys. We can imagine that if in his boyhood he was conscious of his divinity the human life must have been very strange to him. Experience alone could enlighten him and it is that fact which specially fitted him to be a High Priest who could sympathize with our infirmities. His temptation in the wilderness was a human temptation. In passing through the ordeal with a human body he learned the misery of being tempted and consequently he "gained by experience" the power to succor those who are tempted.

226. What Was the Purpose of Christ's Forty Days' Fast?

It was immediately after his baptism by John that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. He had just received the outward acknowledgment of his mission and authority, and now he was to prepare for the more public work before him by a period of prayer, fasting and deeper spiritual experience and communion with the Father. It was, in effect, a higher consecration, if such were possible. During those forty days

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“the plan and future of his work must have been always before him.” Nowhere in the Scripture are we led to conclude that he had not always been clearly conscious of the outline of his mission, although its comprehensiveness and detail could only become apparent as the work proceeded.

227. Was Jesus on Earth and in Heaven at the Same Time?

The passage in John 3:13 is to be taken in connection with the immediately preceding verse. Jesus had told his hearers of earthly things and they believed not. Would they believe if he told them of heavenly things? Yet such knowledge of heavenly things could come only from One who had himself been in heaven, since no other hath ascended, to return with such knowledge, and none could know these things save he that hath descended, even the Son. Many ancient authorities omit the last four words of the verse, “who is in heaven,” regarding them as a later interpolation, unnecessary and tending to confuse the text.

228. Is There Pardon Possible for Jesus' Executioners?

Jesus' words, “Father, forgive them; they know not what they do,” were spoken as his executioners were completing their dread task. But the prayer was not limited to them alone, but included all who had a hand in it, for the apostle could afterward say, with truth, “had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.” In a still wider sense the prayer was a fulfilment of the Messianic prediction in Isa. 53:12. The world, in every age, owes much to these

few words. We have no right to question the validity of Jesus' prayer, that what these fanatical and misguided men did in their ignorance and anger should not be laid to their charge in the final account.

229. Is It Possible to Harmonize the Two Genealogies of Christ Given Respectively by Matthew and Luke?

Many efforts have been made to do so and several hypotheses have been suggested which are reasonable. The one that commends itself to the largest number of scholars is that of Dr. Barrett, who contends that Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph and Luke that of Mary. The husband and wife belonging to the same tribe would naturally have in their genealogical lines some ancestors common to both. After a great deal of research he discovered that the Jews had a habit, in tracing the female line, of speaking of a woman's husband as the son of her father, when really he was the son-in-law. Thus Luke speaks of Heli as the father of Joseph, when he was Mary's father and Joseph's father-in-law. If that theory is correct Jesus could trace his genealogy through Mary to David and Abraham. That there was no flaw in it we may be sure, otherwise the Jews would surely have pointed it out when his Messiahship was claimed. It is matter of history that this question was never raised during his life or for a hundred years after his death.

230. Did God Ever Speak to Jesus as He Did to Moses, Abraham, Jacob and Others?

At the baptism the Father said to Jesus: "Thou art my beloved Son. In thee I am well pleased"

(Luke 3:22; Mark 1:11). The utterances at the Transfiguration (Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35) seem to have been addressed not to Christ himself, but the disciples. [In Matthew's account of the baptism the same form is used (Matt. 3:17).] But whatever kind of communication Jesus had with the Father, it was altogether different from that which any other human being ever had had, or could have. No one could say, as he said, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30), or, still more startlingly, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). We know that Jesus had long periods of communion with the Father. What mystic and beautiful messages passed between them in those prayer vigils we can only wonder. We know that he was, in fact, in constant communion with the Father, for he said: "The Father hath not left me alone" (John 8:29). Only upon the cross was this perfect communion interrupted. It was from the anguish revealed in that cry from the cross that he had pleaded in the garden to be delivered: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

231. Who Was Joseph, the Foster-father of Jesus?

There are many traditions concerning Joseph, the foster-father of the Saviour. One that is generally accepted by early Christian writers is that he was quite old when espoused to Mary, and had by a previous marriage four sons and two daughters. Epiphanius mentions this, and Theophylact and Eusebius give further detail, and state that Joseph's wife was the widow of his brother Cleophas, who died without issue, Joseph marrying her according to the old Jewish law. Ni-

cephorus gives Salome as the name of Joseph's first wife. The origin of all these assertions by the early fathers is found in the apocryphal gospels, and particularly in the *Protevangelium of St. James*, which is supposed to have been written by a Christian Jew in the second century, and which is referred to by Origen, Clement of Alexandria and Justin Martyr in their writings. The Bible gives nothing of them. It should be added that Jerome, and several other eminent authorities, hold that "our Lord's brethren" referred to in the Gospels were his cousins, and that Joseph was not married before his espousal to Mary.

232. At What Meal Did Jesus Institute the Lord's Supper?

There has been much discussion concerning the meal at which the Lord's Supper was instituted, as to whether it was the Paschal supper, according to the Jewish law. The first three Gospels indicate that the use of the guest chamber was secured in the manner customary with those who came from a distance to keep the festival. The three evangelists state that "they made ready the Passover," and Jesus himself calls the meal "this Passover" (Luke 22:15, 16). After a thanksgiving he passed around the first cup, and when the supper was ended there was the usual "cup of blessing" and a hymn was sung, presumably the last part of the *Hallel*. John's Gospel, however, would seem to imply that the Lord's Supper took place the day preceding the usual Jewish Paschal meal (John 13:1, 2). In John 19:14, when our Lord was before Pilate and about to be led out to Calvary, we are told that it was the "preparation" of the Passover, and

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again, after the crucifixion (verse 31), the Jews were solicitous because it was still "the preparation." Further, the law of Ex. 12:22 was that none should go out of the door of his house until the morning after the Paschal supper, although this law may have come into disuse. Lightfoot, a leading authority, claims that the supper was held two days before the Jewish Passover, while Bengel held that it was eaten the evening *before* the Passover. The question is an open one, and in view of conflicting opinions of commentators it will probably so continue.

233. What Would Be the Present Value of the Thirty Pieces of Silver for Which Judas Betrayed the Saviour?

The thirty shekels of silver, it is estimated, would equal about \$20 of our money, a shekel being worth about 62 cents. Thirty shekels equaled 120 denarii, and a denarius was the price of a day's work. The present purchasing power of the money would be perhaps ten times its value in those ancient days.

234. Was There a Roman Census of Judea at the Time When Jesus Was Born?

The passage in Luke 2:1-3, which was formerly so frequently quoted by a certain class of Bible critics as a "blunder" on the part of the Gospel historian, has in recent years received unexpected confirmation. It was claimed that Luke's statement regarding a Roman census of Judea was a pure invention and that Cyrenius was a myth. Now, however, it has been discovered by historians and excavators that the entire passage which has occasioned so much controversy is literal fact. Sir

William Ramsay, the noted archeologist, while excavating at Antioch of Pisidia (in Asia Minor) in 1912-13, unearthed inscriptions which revealed that Cyrenius was the name of the governor of Syria at the period of the Advent. Further, it has been established by careful investigation of ancient historical sources that the Roman authorities took a regular fourteenth-year census, and that under the prevailing law every one at some time within the year had to go and personally register in his native city.

235. What Became of Lazarus and the Son of the Widow of Nain After They Were Resurrected?

There is no authentic record. According to an old tradition, mentioned in Epiphanius, Lazarus, who was thirty years old when he was restored to life, lived thirty years afterward. One account was to the effect that, with Mary and Martha, he traveled to Provence in France, and preached the Gospel in Marseilles. Nothing further is mentioned concerning the subject of the resurrection at Nain.

236. Why Is So Much Stress Laid on the Lord's Supper and so Little on Foot Washing?

Because people have come to hold the spirit in more reverence than the letter. In Christ's time foot washing was a common act of hospitality performed by a servant. In doing it himself for his disciples he took the servant's place. The command is obeyed by any one who is willing to render a humble service to a brother for Christ's sake. The words about the Lord's Supper, "ye do show the Lord's death till he come"

(I Cor. 11:26), sufficiently explain why this loving memorial has survived.

237. Why Was No Contemporaneous Record Made of the Public Ministry of Jesus?

Doubtless the thought has occurred to many that it is somewhat remarkable that no contemporaneous record was made of the public ministry of Jesus. It has been suggested by certain writers that such a purpose does not seem to have occurred to any of his immediate followers at the beginning of his ministry, although as it developed, and more especially toward the close, it is reasonable to assume that some of his disciples may have kept records of a more or less fragmentary character. John, in the close of his Gospel (21:24, 25), says distinctly "this is the disciple which testifieth of these things and *wrote* these things." All four evangelists made records, although at what time cannot be learned, and Jerome states that Theophilus arranged these records into one harmonious work. The Gospels, as we now have them, are to be traced chiefly to the oral teachings of the apostles as their original source; that is, they were proclaimed orally before being committed to writing. It was an age of oral traditions rather than writing. In Luke 1:1-4 there is a very clear intimation that an early effort had been made—probably shortly after the ascension—to set forth a formal statement of Christ's ministry, and that the facts had been related by eyewitnesses and ministers (disciples), who were familiar with the events from the beginning of the public career of Jesus. Westcott writes: "So long as the first witnesses survived, so long the (Gospel) tradition was confirmed

within the bounds of their testimony : when they passed away it was already fixed in writing."

238. What Miracles Did Jesus Perform During His Childhood?

The Evangelists pass over the boyhood of Jesus with the simple remark that his obedience, intelligence and piety won the affections of all who knew him (Luke 2:40, 50, 51). There is no authentic record to show that he performed miracles during his childhood, although the Romish Church preserves certain traditions to that effect.

239. Were the Prophecies Respecting Christ Fulfilled?

Yes, as will be seen by comparing the following passages :

As the Son of God, Ps. 2:7; fulfilled, Luke 1:32, 35.

As the Seed of the woman, Gen. 3:15; fulfilled, Gal. 4:4.

As the Seed of Abraham, Gen. 17:7; fulfilled, Gal. 3, 16.

As the Seed of Isaac, Gen. 21:12; fulfilled, Heb. 11:17-19.

As the Seed of David, Ps. 132:11; fulfilled, Acts 13:23; Rom. 1:3.

His coming at a set time, Gen. 49:10; fulfilled, Luke 2:1.

His being born of a virgin, Isa. 7:14; fulfilled, Matt. 1:18; Luke 2:7.

His being called Immanuel, Isa. 7:14; fulfilled, Matt. 1:22.

His being born in Bethlehem, Judea, Mic. 5:2; fulfilled, Matt. 2:1; Luke 2:4-6.

Great persons coming to adore him, Ps. 72:10; fulfilled, Matt. 2:1-11.

His being called out of Egypt, Hos. 11:1; fulfilled, Matt. 2:15.

His being preceded by John the Baptist, Isa. 40:3; fulfilled, Matt. 3:1-3.

His being anointed with the Spirit, Ps. 45:7; fulfilled, Matt. 3:16.

His ministry commencing in Galilee, Isa. 9:1, 2; fulfilled, Matt. 4:12-16.

His entering publicly into Jerusalem, Zec. 9:9; fulfilled, Matt. 21:1-5.

His poverty, Isa. 53:2; fulfilled, Mark 6:3.

His meekness, Isa. 42:2; fulfilled, Matt. 12:15.

His tenderness and compassion, Isa. 40:11; fulfilled, Matt. 12:15-20.

His being without guile, Isa. 53:9; fulfilled, I Pet. 2:22.

His zeal, Ps. 69:9; fulfilled, John 2:17.

His bearing reproach, Ps. 22:6; fulfilled, Rom. 15:3.

His being betrayed by a friend, Ps. 41:9; fulfilled, John, 13:18-21.

His disciples forsaking him, Zec. 13:7; fulfilled, Matt. 26:31, 56.

His being sold for thirty pieces of silver, Zec. 11:12; fulfilled, Matt. 26:15.

His price being given for the potters' field, Zec. 11:13; fulfilled, Matt. 27:7.

His being numbered with the transgressors, Isa. 53:12; fulfilled, Mark 15:28.

His intercession for his murderers, Isa. 53:12; fulfilled, Luke 23:34.

His death, Isa. 53:12; fulfilled, Mat. 27:50.

That a bone should not be broken, Ex. 12:46; Ps. 34:20; fulfilled, John 19:33, 36.

His being pierced, Zec. 12:10; fulfilled, John 19:34, 37.

His resurrection, Ps. 16:10; fulfilled, Luke 24:6, 31, 34.

His ascension, Ps. 68:18; fulfilled, Luke 24:51.

His sitting on the right hand of God, Ps. 110:1; fulfilled, Heb. 1:3.

240. Was There Any Real Virtue in the Waters of the Pool of Siloam, or Was It a Superstition?

In the account in John's Gospel, fifth chapter, it is made clear that there was a popular belief that the pool possessed certain healing qualities at the time of the "moving" (or inflow) of the waters from the hidden springs. This may or may not have been based on superstition or on some tradition concerning the pool. It should be noted, however, that Jesus (in John 5:6-8) said nothing about any wonderful virtue in the waters of the pool; if there was a tradition or superstition on the subject he simply set it aside and cured the infirm sufferer where he lay. In the case of the blind beggar at the pool of Siloam (John, 9th chapter) there is frequently a misconception in the mind of the reader. Jesus did not tell the blind man to wash "in" the pool, but, having anointed his eyes with clay and spittle, directed him to wash "at" the pool—to cleanse his eyes of the moistened clay with which, under the

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divine touch, the miracle of restoring his sight was accomplished.

241. Whence Came the Custom of Releasing a Prisoner at the Feast as Mentioned (Matt. 27: 15)?

There is no mention of the practise in secular history, but it is easy to see how it may have arisen. In a conquered country it is to the interest of the conquerors to conciliate the people, and a governor wishing to make himself popular would please them if, at a time of public festivity, he granted them such a concession. Generally, the man whose release was asked for would be some leader who had made himself obnoxious to the government by espousing the cause of the subject people. The English government has several times tried to win the support of Irish members of Parliament by releasing some prisoner who has been sent to prison for sedition and has not served out his sentence.

242. Did Jesus Attend School as an Ordinary Boy?

Of the first thirty years of his life little is recorded beyond the incident of his visit to Jerusalem with Joseph and Mary, when he was twelve years old. Usually both parents of a Jewish child took an active part in its early education. It was incumbent on the father to teach his offspring the Law and the other Scriptures, which constituted the essentials of Jewish education. Josephus, the historian, states that, at fourteen, he himself had so thorough a knowledge of the Law that the high priests and first men of the town

sought his opinion. Christ's earlier years, after he had passed from the first lessons of Joseph and Mary, were doubtless spent in school, with other children of the little Galilean village.

243. Did Jesus at Any Time Suffer from Sickness?

That Christ was wearied we know from the inspired record of his life. There is no such record of his being sick at any time. In Matt. 8:17, Revised Version, we read: "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Reference is apparently made to Isa. 53:4: "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." In verse 3 of the same chapter we read that he was acquainted with grief. The words griefs and grief might be rendered respectively sicknesses and sickness; still, there is no assertion in these texts that Christ suffered disease of any kind, any more than the statement that he bare our sins implies that he sinned. His obedience to all law, sanitary included, undoubtedly served to keep him in health.

244. What Was the Name of the Soldier Who Smote Our Lord with His Spear?

It has been preserved to us by tradition as Longinus, a Roman. The tradition still further adds that the spear was brought by Joseph of Arimathea to King Pellam; who was of Joseph's time, and Balim, a savage, seized the spear and wounded Pellam nigh unto death.

245. Where Was the Stable and Manger in Which Christ Was Born Located?

The account of the humble birthplace of the Saviour in Luke 2:7 is all we know about the immediate sur-

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roundings of our Saviour's birthplace. The manger is believed to have been in one of the exterior buildings of a public khan or caravanserai. His entrance into the world in Bethlehem was an express fulfilment of the prediction in Mic. 5:2.

246. Was Simon of Cyrene a White Man or a Negro?

He is believed to have been a native of North Africa, and hence colored as was Philip's convert, the Ethiopian eunuch, and Apollos, the great preacher of Alexandria. The early history of Christianity furnishes many illustrious examples of men and women of color who suffered and died for the faith. Onesimus, one of Paul's most devoted converts, was probably a negro, and there were not a few negroes holding exalted positions in the Christian Church in Africa, the whole northern countries of which, in the early ages, were Christian.

247. Where Was the Spirit of Jesus During the Three Days His Body Lay in the Tomb?

There is little in the Scriptures to throw light on the question "Where was the spirit of Jesus during the three days his body lay in the tomb?" Among the early writers, and by many of later days, the subject has been discussed. The Apostles' Creed says: "He descended into hades" (the place of departed spirits). Some theologians, Dean Alford among them, in discussing the passage in I Pet. 3:19, 20, contended that Christ, in the interval between his death and resurrection, preached or announced his finished work to the spirits "in prison"; but the passage is mysteri-

ous and has always puzzled Bible students. In the early days of the Christian Church, there were several writings on the subject professing to describe the exultation of the saints and the pre-Christian fathers whom he delivered from hades and brought into paradise; but these writings have long ago been stamped as uncanonical and apocryphal.

248. Why Was Jesus, Though Having No Property and Not Engaged in Any Trade, Required to Pay Taxes?

In Matt. 17:24 we read that the tax collector came to Peter saying: "Doth not your master pay tribute?" The Revised Version renders this passage in such a way as to bring out the particular tax which is referred to: "And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received the half shekel came to Peter and said, Doth not your master pay the half shekel?" Following this rendering we learn the tribute or tax referred to to be the gift required by the Mosaic law from all Jews, to meet the expenses of the tabernacle or temple service. Josephus tells us that this tax had come to be collected annually from all Jews over twenty years of age. The tax being for religious purposes, all men shared in it irrespective of their trade or calling and the tax was paid by our Lord as a worshipping Jew who "fulfilled all righteousness."

249. What Were the Names of the Two Thieves Who Were Crucified with Christ?

The names, as preserved by legend and tradition, vary according to different writers, and there is no

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absolutely authentic record on the subject. One early writer (in the Apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus) gives the name of Demas or Dismas as the penitent, who hung on the right hand of the Saviour, and Gestas as the impenitent. Bede gives the names of Matha and Joca, respectively, as those that prevailed in his time. The first, however, have been preserved, and in the hagiology of the Syrian, Greek and Latin churches Dismas is recognized as the penitent malefactor. Bengel asserts the belief that Dismas was a Gentile and Gestas a Jew.

250. Of What Was Jesus' Crown of Thorns Made?

The crown of thorns which was placed upon the brow of Christ is believed to have been either of the thorny species known as the *coppares spinosæ*, or the Arabian nubk. Some writers hold that it may have been the plant known as the southern buckthorn. There is a legend that Empress Helena recovered the thorny crown and preserved it as a sacred relic. Several treatises have been written about it, but nothing definite can be stated.

251. In What Sense Is Christ "Royal"?

When Christ said "Follow me," and when he told his disciples that the test of their affection for him was that they keep his commandments, he took a position that is not even now fully realized by men who call themselves by his name. We are so accustomed to speak of Jesus as being meek and lowly that we are apt to forget how high were the claims he put forth and how implicit is the obedience he requires.

Christ insisted that he was a King, and, at the very last, when clothed with the royal robe in mockery, he would abate not one jot of his claim, even when he knew that he was furnishing Pilate with an excuse for putting him to death. He firmly believed in his own royalty, and, in simple majesty, he performed its functions.

Christ was a king in the sense of establishing a kingdom. He proclaimed the kingdom of God. People scoffed at him, but he was right, and his claims have been substantiated. They would have understood him had he set up his throne in Jerusalem and defied the Roman power. But how much higher was his ideal! He conceived of a kingdom which should embrace all nations and be above all governments. He has established such a kingdom. Throughout the world are to be found men loyal to their respective rulers, good citizens and law-abiding men, who in a day would be turned into rebels if the claims of those rulers ever became antagonistic to the claims of Christ. He is to them King of kings, and their allegiance to him transcends all others.

He is also king in the sense of legislation. He does not argue or explain. His is no limited monarchy. His word is "I say unto you." He expects unfaltering, unquestioning obedience. Personal attachment, personal loyalty are the principles of his kingdom. Men may hold different creeds, may worship him by different ceremonies, but there must be no division, no diversity in allegiance to him. He issues his commandments, and it is only as we obey that we can have any valid claim to call ourselves by his name. Only so can we enter the kingdom of heaven.

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252. Why Did Jesus Drive the Money-changers Out of the Temple?

When Jesus drove the money-changers out of the Temple he gave the reason in Matt. 21:13, Mark 11:17. They had profaned and defiled it with their merchandise. Their occupations were worldly, and had no proper place in the Lord's house.

253. How Much Wine Did Jesus Make at the Wedding Feast in Cana?

The only source of information is the Gospel narrative. The Evangelist estimated the capacity of each of the six waterpots at "*two or three firkins.*" The firkin, according to Smith's *Dictionary of Classical Antiquities*, was equal to eight gallons and seven-eighths of a gallon. Thus the Evangelist's estimate gives us as the capacity of each jar somewhere between seventeen and twenty-six gallons. Nothing is told us about the vessel in which it was borne to the governor of the feast. It was probably a pitcher. There is an ancient picture on ivory in existence which represents the miracle. It is believed to have been painted not later than the seventh century. In this the jars are represented as wide stone jars as high as the breast of the man who is drawing from them. He holds in his hand a drinking-cup which apparently would hold about a pint. This, however, is only the conception of the miracle formed by an artist who lived about six hundred years after the miracle was performed.

254. What Have Brainy Men, Not Known as Active Christians, Said About Jesus?

Napoleon Bonaparte expressed the following view of Jesus: "I know men, and I tell you Jesus Christ

was not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires and the gods of other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christianity and other religions the distance of infinity. Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne and myself founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon sheer force. Jesus Christ alone founded his empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men will die for him. In every other existence but that of Christ how many imperfections! From the first day to the last he is the same; majestic and simple, infinitely firm and infinitely gentle. He proposes to our faith a series of mysteries and commands with authority that we should believe them, giving no other reason than those tremendous words: I am God." "Jesus is the most perfect of all men that have yet appeared," said Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Thomas Carlyle wrote of him: "Jesus is our divinest symbol. Higher has the human thought not yet reached. A symbol of quite perennial, infinite character: whose significance will ever demand to be anew inquired and anew made manifest." Lord Byron paid this tribute: "If ever man was God, or God man, Jesus Christ was both."

Rousseau, greatest in his line, writes as follows: "Can it be possible that the same personage whose history the Scriptures contain should be a mere man? Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live and so die without weakness and without ostentation? When Plato describes his imaginary righteous man, loaded with all the punishments of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he exactly describes the character of Jesus Christ. What an infinite

disproportion between the Son of Saphronisius and the Son of Mary. Socrates dies with honor, surrounded by his disciples listening to the most tender words—the easiest death that one could wish to die. Jesus dies in pain, dishonor, mockery, the object of universal cursing—the most horrible death that one could fear. At the receipt of the cup of poison Socrates blesses him who could not give it to him without tears; Jesus, while suffering the sharpest pains, prays for his most bitter enemies. If Socrates lived and died like a philosopher Jesus lived and died like a God.” Benjamin Disraeli, mighty and honest Jew, pays this tribute to our Lord: “The wildest dreams of their rabbis have been far exceeded. Has not Jesus conquered Europe and changed its name to Christendom? All countries that refuse the cross wither and the time will come when the vast countries and countless myriads of America and Australia, looking upon Europe as Europe now looks upon Greece, and wondering how so small a space could have achieved such great deeds, will find music in the songs of Zion and solace in the parables of Galilee.”

SAYINGS OF JESUS

**255. Where Is "Chorazin" in Which Jesus Said
He Had Done Mighty Works (Matt.
11:21).**

There is no record of Christ having visited Chorazin. This mention of the place shows how far the Gospels are from being complete narratives of Christ's life. He had evidently been there and worked miracles, yet none of the four evangelists describes the visit. The author of the Fourth Gospel admits the incomplete character of his own work (John 21:25) and says that if all Jesus said and did had been written the books needed would have been more than the world could contain (that is could profitably use). The site of Chorazin was unknown until recently, when Dr. Robinson identified it with Kherza, a ruined town three miles from Capernaum.

**256. What Was the "Cup" Which Jesus De-
sired to Have Pass from Him in Geth-
semane?**

In Matt. 26:39 the "cup" undoubtedly referred to the whole sum of Christ's suffering in making the atonement for sin, particularly the suffering on the cross. There have been many explanations of the garden agony. The explanation that Jesus was afraid he would die in Gethsemane does not seem convincing. Nor does the answer sometimes given, that Christ

shrank from the mere suffering, seem adequate, considering his splendid and unfailing courage. His words on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" imply that there was a real separation from the Father in this dreadful experience. There is a depth of mystery here before which the most thoughtful and reverent may well pause. Yet it seems reasonable to believe that, although Christ's soul was to the last absolutely untainted by sin, he suffered, in some real way, the results of sin in his own spirit. It was this horrible, unspeakable experience of alienation from God from which he shrank and which gave rise to the agonizing prayer that at the eleventh hour some other method might be found of making atonement for sin.

257. What Is Necessary for a Christian to Do to Fulfil the Requirements of: If Any Man Will Come After Me, Let Him Deny Himself and Take Up His Cross and Follow Me?

This passage in Matt. 16:24 has been often discussed. It would be impossible to state just what details for each individual life are involved in this sacrifice. Christ definitely commanded the rich young ruler to sell all his property and give it to the poor. He refused, and, so far as we know, lost his soul. But Christ left no specific command that every follower of his must do that same thing. What he did demand, and still demands, is that every follower must acknowledge that all his possessions belong to Christ, must cease to use them selfishly, and begin and continue to use them for the welfare of others. It is

true enough that radical changes would take place in society if all professed Christians should really live on this principle. But it is the clear teaching of Christ, and we cannot do otherwise without forfeiting our discipleship. We must deny ourselves for the sake of others, we must "take up our cross," that is, must do the thing that is hard or will cause us loss, because our loyalty to Christ demands it; and we must follow him in paths of self-sacrifice and sympathetic helpfulness.

258. What Did Jesus Mean in Saying that the Least in the Kingdom of Heaven Is Greater than John?

The Saviour, in Matt. 11:11, was referring not to John's personal character, but presumably to his official standing or position in the economy of grace, in which, although he was above those that went before him, he belonged to the old dispensation and was therefore behind the humblest worker in the new order of things. See Matt. 11:15; Luke 16:16, which further illustrate the meaning of the passage.

259. What Was Christ's Definition of the Word "Everlasting"?

We have before noted the fact that Christ uses the same word when speaking of the duration of the life of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked. The literal rendering of the speech word (aionios), translated sometimes "eternal" and at other times "everlasting" in the New Testament, is age-lasting. If, with the help of a concordance, you will look up the two words "eternal" and "everlasting," wherever

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they occur in the New Testament, you will be able to form a reasonable opinion of Christ's meaning of the word. In Eph. 3:11 and I Tim. 1:17 the word "everlasting" comes from a slightly different word, and in Rom. 1:20 and Jude 6 the word "everlasting" is quite a different word. Omit these four passages, therefore, in your study.

260. What Did Christ Mean by Saying That His People Were the Light of the World?

Being taught elsewhere that Christ is the light of the world we cannot well understand Matt. 5:14, "Ye are the light of the world," unless we consider that his people were lights in view of the Spirit of Christ which was in them. When Christ left the world they were to take his place. In Prov. 4:18 you have the same figure, "The path of the just is as a shining light." They were to give the light to the world. Some men who would never be impressed by a sermon or by reading the Bible are attracted to God by the lives and goodness of Christian people whom they know.

261. What Is Meant by "The Son of Man Came Not to Be Ministered Unto but to Minister"?

This passage in Matt. 20:28 has been the subject of some doubt. Christ, of course, came to earth to win all men to his service, but it was for their sakes rather than his own. To serve him meant salvation; it was sin that kept them from their allegiance to him. And he came to save them from their sins. All the time he was in the flesh he gave rather than accepted

service. He was moved by love. Even when the people would have taken him by force to make him king he would not accept it. That was not the kind of service he wanted. He wanted men to serve him in holiness and spiritual power. He gave his body in humiliation and sacrifice in order that they might be lifted up to this higher plane of service. The whole message of the New Testament is that Christ came to earth for the sake of mankind, not for his own sake. And he taught by example the life of humility, self-sacrifice and service which he wishes all men to lead.

262. Whom Does the Widow Represent in the Parable of the Unjust Judge?

The story of the importunate widow related in Luke 18 is a parable which is designed to follow as a continuation of the subject treated in the previous chapter—the coming of the Son of man, which, however long it might be delayed, should yet be the theme of our prayers and our hopes. Commentators on the parable hold that the Christian Church is represented as a widow, desolate, oppressed and defenseless, and exposed to all manner of indignities and wrongs from which the Judge of all can alone set her speedily free. Her incessant crying, even when he seems to have turned a heedless ear, shows her faith, and ultimately produces the desired result.

263. Why Did Jesus Give Us the Parable of the Unjust Steward? (Luke 16: 1-9)

The conduct of the steward was dishonest, but Christ did not hold up his dishonesty for imitation. He was inculcating the same lesson that he taught in Matt.

25:34-40. Those who ministered to the poor and the afflicted, especially to the followers of Christ, would receive a reward out of all proportion to their services. If they knew how great that reward was they would not let the opportunity escape them. The children of the world were more crafty, and then he tells of one of them who worked a device at his master's expense to effect this object. He placed his master's debtors under an obligation, so that they might feel bound to help him, when he needed it, as he had helped them. It was not Christ who commended him, but his own lord, who admired the shrewdness of his dishonest scheme.

264. To Whom Did Jesus Refer When He Asked Peter: "Lovest Thou Me More than These?"

The question in John 21:15 is somewhat obscure. It is just as impossible in Greek as in English to tell whether the word "these," as it is used here, refers to persons or to things. In some cases it would be evident, because the form of the pronoun differs in different genders and numbers. But this is the genitive plural, and the form is alike for all genders. It is likely that Jesus indicated by his question that he meant "More than these other disciples." That is, "Do you love me more than they love me?" He probably refers to Peter's boast that although all the rest should forsake the Master he himself would remain true, implying that he loved him more than any of the rest. But in answering the question now Peter does not repeat his boast. He merely says: "Thou knowest that I love thee." There is the possibility,

however, that Jesus meant: "Do you love me more than you love these other men?" or "Do you love me more than you love these earthly things and tasks?"

265. Why Did Jesus Employ Parables in His Teaching?

Jesus himself gives us the clue in Mark 4:12. He did not begin to do so until his miracles were malignantly ascribed to Satanic agencies. His enemies saw his works, yet closed their eyes to their source and spiritual meaning. They heard his words, for he "spake as never man spake"; yet they were deaf to the life-giving message conveyed. They voluntarily refused to accept the Gospel and at length became morally incapable of doing so.

266. What Custom Did Our Lord Object to When He Blamed the Pharisees for Praying in the Streets?

The passage in Matt. 6:5, "They love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets that they may be seen of men," has reference to the desire of the Pharisees to parade their outward show of religion. A rigid Pharisee prayed many times daily and had certain set hours for doing so. Many of them took pains to show their praying customs to the public for its admiration, and thus allowed their hours of prayer to overtake them while at the street corners in full view of any who might be about. They sought the praise of men and would not scruple at any methods for attracting public attention. What the Lord desires to impress on us here is that our religion should be of the heart and not of the market-place. Our re-

ligion should be of that sort that is satisfied when he that seeth in secret knows about it. "If a man's religion be a round of forms and ceremonies," says one commentator, "then he will be sure to want somebody—some fellow man—to look on and admire, and he will soon come, more or less consciously, to adjust and arrange his doings so as to win men's admiration." This, however, is not Christ's religion and, therefore, he warns against it.

267. Have Christ's Prophecies of Persecutions Been Fulfilled?

The persecution of Christians dates from the beginning of Christianity. According to McClintock and Strong, there were ten pagan persecutions of the Christian Church, viz.: Under Nero (A. D. 74), when great multitudes perished; under Domitian, when in one year (A. D. 95) 40,000 suffered martyrdom; under Trajan and his successor Adrian, when vast numbers were accused and executed, mostly without even a pretense of legal trial; under Antoninus, when the persecutions took a wide range. Then came the persecutions under Severus, Maximinus, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian and Diocletian. In the last decade of this inhuman period hundreds of thousands were slain, 140,000 in Egypt alone, while 700,000 succumbed to the hardship and fatigue they were compelled to face. Persecutions by Catholics form a long and dark record. In Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, Bohemia and Holland the victims were almost innumerable. The Belgic martyrs who died for their faith are estimated at 100,000. In France in the reign of Charles IX the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre, it is variously

estimated, had from 30,000 to 100,000 victims. But all previous atrocities seem to have been eclipsed by the hideous persecution of Protestants in France in the time of Louis XVI. Few countries were free from such visitations. England, Ireland, Scotland, Spain, Italy, all experienced them in turn, some much more heavily than others.

268. What Did Christ Teach as to the Difference Between the Righteousness Taught by Him and That Preached by the Pharisees?

In Matt. 5:20 he shows that the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees was formal; it did not spring from the heart. Christ's plan of righteousness is that it should be the spontaneous fruitage of a meek, worshipful, affectionate spirit; that it should spring from an ardent, self-forgetful love to God and man. In verses 29, 30 he shows that righteousness and salvation are such priceless things that nothing in the world must be allowed to stop our pursuit of them. The eternal values are here contrasted with earthly values; better suffer any loss or sacrifice here than to miss eternal life. He wished to impress on his hearers the terrible importance of spiritual and eternal things; then they would learn that eyes and hands must be used, not for the gratification of self, but for service to men in the name of Christ. The Jews thought they had exclusive rights to salvation, but Jesus shows in Matt. 8:11, 12 that many Gentiles shall enter the kingdom of heaven while many of the chosen people shall be cast out. It is another insistence that real religion must be of the heart; membership in the Jew-

ish race will not save unless the heart is right. This righteousness must, however, meet the test, as did the Master who promulgated it. Christ made the extreme sacrifice in coming to earth (see Phil. 2:6-8 and II Cor. 8:9). His followers, therefore, must realize their obligation to make any sacrifice for his sake, even to disregarding all outside "considerations in which latter the Pharisees and other ritualists find much righteousness." Therefore, he asked his followers, in Matt. 8:22, to disregard a sacred duty. Under ordinary circumstances he wants his followers to fulfil their obligations to households and friends, but in this case he probably saw that the man had not definitely made up his mind to put Jesus first in his life. If he could have trusted him he would probably have directed him to attend the obsequies of his father and then return; but he feared that if the man got back among his old acquaintances he would lose his determination to be a follower of Jesus. Christ everywhere insists that he must be first; then he directs his followers to fulfil their social obligations in his name, serving others for his sake.

269. Does the Command "First Be Reconciled to Thy Brother and Then Come and Offer Thy Gift" (Matt. 5:24) Mean that God Will Not Accept Our Gifts if Our Lives Are Not Consecrated to Him?

There is in these words of Jesus no intimation that the gift will not be accepted. "First be reconciled to thy brother, and *then come and offer thy gift.*" He is insisting that we cannot pacify God with gifts if there is injustice in our lives. An extreme case will illus-

trate this point: Suppose a thief wishes to get right with God. He cannot do so by making gifts. He must make every possible effort to return to its rightful owners the property he has stolen before his gifts can be acknowledged in heaven. In other words, we cannot straighten out injustice by charity. Justice should precede generosity. There is something splendid and regal about the uncompromising demands of Jesus. A prominent Free Methodist pastor has a favorite motto: "Nothing is made right until it is made right." If God commands us to do one thing we cannot fulfil his requirement by making a substitute proposition and doing something else. He demands that we live on terms of justice and honor with our neighbors. He is so insistent upon this that he cannot be pleased with our worship or service until we have established our lives upon this basis. At every step we need his divine grace, grace to help us to live justly with our neighbor and grace to worship and serve him acceptably. We must be careful not to judge others in this matter, except in cases where we know that positive wrong has been done. The final answer to the question depends upon what we mean by the word "consecrated." There are many Christians who feel that while they wish to serve God there are certain sacrifices and services so difficult that they shrink from making this full surrender. While God is very stern in such cases he is also very gentle and patient. He will receive our services and gifts, hoping that we shall soon be led to make the full surrender. The passage referred to does not deal with this phase in Christian life, except so far as it relates to the matter of making right the wrongs we have done to others.

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In this there must be no delay. Indeed, there should be no delay whatever in making the complete, glad surrender to God which will bring us the fulness of his power and put us in line with his richest blessings.

270. Does the Lord, in the Parable of the Fellow Servants (Matt. 18:25), Favor Slavery?

No, he does not. We must remember the distinction between compelled personal service in the East and the slavery in which the negroes among us suffered. In the East man is often treated as property and such treatment well agrees with the tribal idea in which the chief is the owner of all the members of the tribe. "Easterners do not punish by perpetual imprisonment or by penal servitude, but consider selling a person, and even his family which was dependent on him, along with him, for debt, a more hopeful way of punishing him. A man who proved himself unable to manage money was wisely sentenced to work all the rest of his life for another. Knowing these facts, it was but natural that Jesus should employ them in his parables, the more so as he always spoke in the terms familiar to his age. We must clearly see that he referred to the slavery which he knew of, and not to the slavery which had disgraced the late Christian centuries."

271. What Did Christ Mean by His Statement That He Would Come Before the Disciples Had Gone Over the Cities of Israel?

The statement in Matt. 10:23, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be

come," has caused much discussion. It is not clear whether Christ referred to the time of persecution, which followed his revelation of himself in his resurrection, or to the taking of Jerusalem, or to his final coming at the end of the dispensation. Probably if we had a verbatim report of his words his meaning would be understood. It is not important.

272. What Is the True Meaning of "Poor in Spirit" as It Occurs in the Beatitudes?

Poor in spirit denotes, not circumstances, but inward character; not a condition of life, but a state and temper of mind. To be beaten utterly out of conceit with one's own strength, goodness and wisdom; to feel that apart from God's grace we are nothing, can do nothing. It is he who feels most poignantly his need of all, who will most heartily hail the promise of the free gift of all. Our Saviour says we are happy, blessed, in proportion as we feel our own want, our own emptiness, in things spiritual. The more we are poor, the more we are rich. This poverty of spirit being the condition of every blessing, therefore to it is attached the promise of the kingdom of heaven, which is inclusive of all blessings.

The word for "poor" means utter destitution, and "in spirit" defines the sphere of destitution. Some interpret this, "destitute of the wealth of learning and intellectual culture which the schools offered, because men of this class readily gave themselves up to Christ's teaching, and proved themselves fitted to lay hold of the heavenly treasure." Others make the idea more inward and ethical, that is, destitute of spiritual blessings. This is better. But shall we read, "poor in the

spirit," that is, poor in spiritual treasures, or "poor in their spirit," that is, conscious of their spiritual need? There is no virtue in poverty. The church at Laodicea was "poor, and blind, and naked," but was rebuked by Christ. They thought they were rich and had need of nothing. So it is better to read, conscious of their spiritual need. It is this consciousness of need that leads one to seek the grace of God in Jesus Christ. The publican who prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner," is a good illustration of those "poor in spirit," whose is the kingdom of heaven.

273. What Is Meant by Christ's Figure of Speech About the Salt That Has Lost Its Flavor and Is Therefore Cast Out to Be Trodden Under Foot of Men?

The passage in Matt. 5: 13, "If the salt has lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men," is based upon actual facts of Eastern life. It is well known that salt under certain conditions loses its saltiness. Dr. Thomson, in *The Land and the Book*, tells this story to substantiate this contention: "A merchant of Sidon having a large supply of salt filled sixty-five houses in a mountainous district with it. These houses had merely earthen floors and the salt next the ground was in a few years entirely spoiled. This salt, becoming insipid and useless, effloresced and turned to dust, not to fruitful soil, however. It was not only good for nothing itself, but it actually destroyed all fertility wherever it was thrown, and this is the reason why it is thrown into the street.

So troublesome is this corrupted salt that it is carefully swept up, carried forth and thrown into the street. There is no place about the house, yard or garden where it is tolerated. No man will allow it to be thrown onto his field, and the only place for it is the street; and there it is cast to be trodden under foot of men."

274. What Is Meant by "If Thy Hand or Thy Foot Offend Thee, Cut It Off"?

The words of Jesus in Matt. 18:8-10 point out—among other things—the wickedness of those who, by evil example and by their impure inclinations, their quarrelsome and revengeful dispositions, their unworthy aims and ambitions, stand in the way of others and prevent them from seeking salvation. It is as though he had said there would be stumblings and pitfalls enough through the world's treatment of young and inexperienced souls without any addition from the disciples, and he warns them not to share in such wickedness, as the one who, after having himself received light, wilfully caused others to stumble was doubly an offender. Far better were it for him to make any personal sacrifice than to be the means of causing a weaker brother or sister to stumble and lose faith.

275. What Language Did Christ Use in His "Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani"?

The passage in Mark 15:34 is identical with Ps. 22:1, and commentators express the opinion that it was uttered by the Saviour on the cross not in the current Greek, nor in the Hebrew original, but in the

native Syriac, the mother tongue of his earthly life. It was the crisis of his sufferings, the moment in which he "must taste the bitterest of the wages of sin, who did not sin." Contrast this with the cry "It is finished," in which "the mighty voice of the expiring Redeemer was nothing else but the exultant spirit of the dying victor," perceiving the fruit of his travail and nerving the organs of utterance to an ecstatic expression of its loftiest feelings in the one glorious sentence.

276. What Is Jesus' Testament?

John 14, and it is one of the most sacred chapters in the Gospels, being a record of the last moments passed by Jesus among his disciples before the great crisis. Love filled his heart and flowed from his lips. His language assumed even a loftier strain than usual. In his intercessory prayer he poured out his soul in behalf of those who were already his own. To the disciples it was a discourse both of cheer and sorrow. He seemed to open heaven's gates, to give them a glimpse of the heavenly home, the "house of many mansions" that awaited them, and whither he was now going. More than ever before he expressed with clearness and simplicity his close and loving relations to them. He strengthened their faith, promised them an endowment of spiritual power and the coming of the Comforter to be their guide and adviser. In dignity, significance and supreme affection, it was a parting address whose equal never fell from human lips.

277. Does the Command of Jesus, "First Be Reconciled to Thy Brother," Mean that God Will Not Accept Our Gifts if Our Lives Are Not Consecrated to Him?

There is in these words of Jesus (Matt. 5:23, 24) no intimation that the gift will not be accepted. "First be reconciled to thy brother, and *then come and offer thy gift.*" He is insisting that we cannot pacify God with gifts if there is injustice in our lives. An extreme case will illustrate this point: Suppose a thief wishes to get right with God. He cannot do so by making gifts. He must make every possible effort to return to its rightful owners the property he has stolen before his gifts can be acknowledged in heaven. In other words, we cannot straighten out injustice by charity. Justice should precede generosity. There is something splendid and regal about the uncompromising demands of Jesus. A prominent Free Methodist pastor has a favorite motto: "Nothing is made right until it is made right." If God commands us to do one thing we cannot fulfil his requirement by making a substitute proposition and doing something else. He demands that we live on terms of justice and honor with our neighbors. He is so insistent upon this that he cannot be pleased with our worship or service until we have established our lives upon this basis. At every step we need his divine grace, grace to help us to live justly with our neighbor and grace to worship and serve him acceptably. We must be careful not to judge others in this matter, except in cases where we know that positive wrong has been done. The final answer to the question depends upon what you mean by the

word "consecrated." There are many Christians who feel that while they wish to serve God there are certain sacrifices and services so difficult that they shrink from making this full surrender. While God is very stern in such cases he is also very gentle and patient. He will receive our services and gifts, hoping that we shall soon be led to make the full surrender. The passage referred to does not deal with this phase in Christian life, except so far as it relates to the matter of making right the wrongs we have done to others. In this there must be no delay. Indeed, there should be no delay whatever in making the complete, glad surrender to God which will bring us the fulness of his power and put us in line with his richest blessings.

278. In What Sense Are We to Understand the Quotation from the Psalms Applied to Christ in John 2:17: "The Zeal of Thine House Hath Eaten Me Up"?

It simply implies an intensity of zeal that absorbed him. His disciples were astonished at their teacher's conduct. He was usually so gentle and inoffensive that they were amazed at this sudden ebullition of indignation. They could scarcely recognize Jesus as he took the scourge and drove the traders out of the Temple. It was so vigorous a thing to do that it probably seemed to them inconsistent with his character. When, however, they remembered the words quoted, they understood how his whole soul was stirred when he saw the building consecrated to his Father used as a common market.

WORDS AND TERMS

279. What Is Adoption?

Adoption, in the theological sense, is "that act of God's free grace by which, when we are justified by faith in Christ, we are received into the family of God, and become heirs to the heavenly inheritance" (see Rom. 8: 17; II Cor. 6: 18; Rom. 8: 15, 16). The certainty of one's adoption and of the inheritance warranted by it are counted among the attributes of the new birth. This adoption is according to promise, is by faith, is of God's grace through Christ (Rom. 9: 8; Gal. 3: 29; Gal. 3: 7, 26; Ezek. 16: 3-6; Rom. 4: 16, 17; Eph. 1: 5, 6, 11; John 1: 12; Gal. 4: 4, 5; Eph. 1: 5; Heb. 2: 10, 13). Saints are predestined unto adoption and even the Gentiles are selected for it (Rom. 8: 29; Eph. 1: 5-11; Hos. 2: 23; Rom. 9: 24-26; Eph. 3: 6). The adopted are gathered together in one by Christ, their new birth is connected with it and the Holy Spirit is not only a witness of our adoption but the very fact that the said Spirit leads us is an evidence of our adoption (John 11: 52; John 1: 12, 13; Rom. 8: 14; Rom. 8: 16). This adoption is a privilege of saints and by it they become brethren of Christ, but while waiting for the final consummation we are subject to the fatherly discipline of God, which, however, is not to be feared as God is longsuffering and merciful to the partakers of his adoption (John 1: 12; John 20: 17; Heb. 2: 11, 12; Rom. 8: 19, 23; I John 3: 2; Deu.

8:5; II Sam. 7:14; Prov. 3:11, 12; Heb. 12:5-11; Jer. 31:1, 9, 20). Our adoption should lead to holiness and produce likeness to God, childlike confidence in God together with a desire for God's glory, a spirit of prayer, a love of peace, a forgiving and merciful spirit (II Cor. 6:17, 18; II Cor. 7:1; Phil. 2:15; Matt. 5:44, 45; Eph. 5:1; Matt. 6:25-34; Matt. 5:16; Matt. 7:7-11; Matt. 5:9; Matt. 6:14; Luke 6:35, 36). Those who receive this adoption are safe and are entitled to an inheritance (Prov. 14:26; Matt. 13:43; Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:29; Gal. 4:7; Eph. 3:6).

280. What Are We Taught About Baptism with the Holy Ghost?

As distinguished from the baptism with water as practised by the apostles and the church after them, there is a Holy Ghost baptism. It was foretold by the prophet Ezekiel (36:25): "Then will I sprinkle clear water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." This baptism is through Christ as we read Tit. 3:5: "But according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." As John (Matt. 3:11) prophesied that he that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire, so when Christ had come he said of him (John 1:33): "He that sent me to baptize with water the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." This form of baptism is promised to saints (Acts 1:5; Acts 2:38, 39), and they all partake of it (I Cor. 12:13) because it is necessary. Christ him-

self says of it (John 3:5): "Except a man be born of the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God," and Paul assures us that Christ saves "by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. 3:5), also Peter (I Pet. 3:21) writes to like effect when he says "ever baptism doth also now save us," and draws the distinction that it is the Holy Ghost baptism rather than the water baptism that renews and cleanses the soul. To the attainment of this baptism the word of God is instrumental, yes, essential. "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word," says Paul to the Ephesians (Eph. 5:26), and in Acts 10:44 we read that "While Peter yet spake" (of Jesus and his works) "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word."

281. What Is Belief?

"Belief" has been defined as "the assent of the mind to the truth of a proposition." In the spiritual sense it means the "unreserved acceptance of God's plan of salvation, as expressed through the Gospel teaching, the life and atonement of his divine incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, and the acceptance of Christ as a personal Saviour." This belief does not come through any intellectual operation, but is the result of faith, which enables us to lay hold of that which the mind itself cannot achieve by any of the ordinary intellectual processes. Yet it is not a blind and superstitious assent, but rather a "saving grace whereby we receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation." As the child believes in his earthly parent, nothing doubting, so we are to look to our heavenly Father, who will give us this faith if we ask it in all sincerity. He will

refuse it to none who come to him in this spirit and with an earnest desire to forsake sin. Our faith may be weak at first, like that of the man who cried out: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief," but he will strengthen it until we can realize what it means to "walk by faith." Being quickened by the power of the Holy Spirit, we learn to trust wholly in God's love for us as expressed in the redemptive work of Christ "the Author and Finisher of faith," for the salvation of a fallen world. Throughout the whole experience of the earlier stages of the Christian life we should remember that faith is God's gift, and that "whosoever receiveth not the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein."

282. What Is the New Birth?

Why new birth? Because the corruption of human nature requires it (John 3:6; Rom. 8:7, 8), and none can enter heaven without it (John 3:3). This new birth is effected by God through Christ and the Holy Ghost (John 1:13; I John 2:29; John 3:6; Tit. 3:5). He effects the new birth by the word of God, preaching the resurrection of Christ and his redeeming grace (James 1:18; I Pet. 1:3), and is of the will and mercy of God and to his glory (James 1:18; Tit. 3:5; Isa. 43:7). The Scriptures describe it as a new creation, a spiritual resurrection, a new heart, new spirit, as putting on the new man, partaking of the divine nature (II Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:4; Eph. 2:1, 5; Ezek. 36:26; Rom. 7:6; Eph. 4:24; Rom. 7:22; II Pet. 1:4). The new birth produces likeness to God and Christ, knowledge of God, hatred of sin, victory

over the world and delight in God's law and is evidenced by faith in Christ, righteousness and brotherly love (Eph. 4:24; Rom. 8:29; Jer. 24:7; I John 3:9; 5:1; 2:29; 4:7; Rom. 7:22).

283. What Is the Second Blessing?

Many persons who have long been identified with the church come to feel the need of a definite experience which shall make them conscious of loving God and really desirous to please him. The experience of peace found by such a seeker is the same as that which comes to any unconverted person who has never made any profession of religion. When one has been soundly converted feelings of dissatisfaction are almost sure to follow the first weeks or months of peace. They point the way to a still higher and better experience to which the Holy Spirit would lead us. It is not necessary to bother with explanations and definitions about this "second blessing." The Bible and Christian experience unite in summoning all converts to this "higher ground," into this inner circle. God certainly can keep you "in all things" as well as in some. You must trust him for cleansing and keeping and energizing power, as well as for pardoning and regenerating power. Study carefully such passages as Ezek. 36:25-27; II Cor. 7:1; Gal. 3; Eph. 3:14-21; Col. 3; I Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:9-11; Heb. 10:1-23; Heb. 13:20. Appropriating these and God's other "rich promises" to your own soul's needs, go forward vigorously in helping and serving others, and you will find the Christian life an ever-deepening satisfaction and delight, and the second blessing will follow.

284. What Was the Position and Office of an Elder, According to Scripture?

According to the accepted definition, "the office of elder was the only permanent and essential office of the church," under both the old and new dispensations. The elders of the New Testament church were pastors (Eph. 4:11), bishops or overseers (Acts 20:28), leaders and rulers (Heb. 13:7; I Thess. 5:12) of the flock. They were also the teachers of the congregation, expounding and preaching and also administering the sacraments. Doubtless many were elders who did not leave their temporal occupations. In the modern church their duties are somewhat modified, although the same general characteristics remain.

285. What Is Faith?

Faith is defined by the apostle (Heb. 11:1) as the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. If there were any doubt as to its desirability, the command of Christ (Mark 11:22), "Have faith," should be enough of an incentive. The objects of faith are God and Christ as revealed to us by Moses, the prophets and the Gospel (John 14:1; John 6:29; Acts 20:21; John 5:46; II Chron. 20:20), and God's promises (Rom. 4:21; Heb. 11:13). Faith in Christ, that precious, most holy and fruitful gift that is accompanied by repentance and followed by conversion, is the gift of God through the Holy Ghost, produced through the Scriptures and teachings therefrom (Rom. 12:3; Acts 11:21; II Pet. 1:1; Jude 20; I Thess. 1:3; Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21; I Cor. 12:9; John 20:31; John 17:20. Through this faith we obtain remission of sins, justification, salvation, sanctification,

spiritual light and life, edification, preservation, adoption, access to God and eternal life with rest in heaven (Acts 10:43; 13:39; Mark 16:16; Acts 15:9; John 12:36; John 20:31; 3:15; Heb. 4:3; I Tim. 1:4; I Pet. 1:5; John 1:12; Rom. 5:2). Without faith it is impossible to please God, it is essential to the profitable reception of the Gospel, necessary in the Christian warfare since justification is only by it (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 4:16; Heb. 4:2). It produces hope, joy, peace and confidence, makes Christ precious to those who have it and makes him to dwell in their hearts (Rom. 5:2; Acts 16:34; Rom. 15:13; Isa. 28:16; I Pet. 2:7; Eph. 3:17). By faith saints live, are supported, stand, walk, obtain a good report, overcome the word, resist the devil and they should be sincere in it, abound therein, continue in it, be strong in it, stand fast in and have full assurance thereof (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 11:20; 4:12; Heb. 11:2; I John 5:4, 5; I Pet. 5:9; Eph. 6:16; Ps. 27:13; I Tim. 1:5; II Cor. 8:7; Acts 14:22; Rom. 4:20; I Cor. 16:13; Col. 1:23; I Tim. 1:19). True faith is evidenced by its fruits, is dead without fruits, overcomes all difficulties and is a shield and breastplate against all danger (James 2:21-25; 17:20-26; Matt. 17:20; Eph. 6:16; I Thess 5:8).

286. What Is the Difference Between Faith and Absolute Determination?

The person who is absolutely determined to quit sin and lead a godly life may be supposed to be depending on his own strength. He is resolved to change his ways and to be a Christian. The person who exercises faith depends on the strength of Christ. He is convinced that he cannot change himself; he has

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learned from experience that good resolutions are apt to be broken, and he places himself in Christ's hands to be saved. He is sure that Christ is able to save him from punishment for past sins, and to keep him from falling into new sins. He is also sure that Christ is willing to save him and he trusts, not in his own resolves, but solely and only in Christ. The difference, you see, is radical.

287. Is the Biblical Term "Hell" Used in a Symbolical or Literal Sense?

There is a tendency among a certain class of critics to symbolize many things in Scripture even where the text is clear and explicit. The Bible language concerning future punishments and rewards cannot be explained away by such methods. While the Bible abounds in metaphor and similitude, these are used in their proper places, and to the diligent student, who searches with faith and an open mind, they are not confusing. Certainly, where it refers to God the Creator, the loving and merciful Father, to his Son the Saviour, and to the plan of salvation for the redemption of the human race, it is sufficiently clear to have convinced countless multitudes and have transformed their lives.

288. What Are Heresies in the Biblical Sense of the Term?

The Greek word translated "heresies" in Gal. 5:20 means either an opinion or a party. As used in the New Testament it stands for an opinion "varying from the true exposition of the Christian faith" (as in II Pet. 2:11), or a body of men following mistaken or

blameworthy ideas, or, as a combination of these two meanings, "dissensions." This latter definition "dissensions" is the rendering given by Thayer of this passage. The American revision translates the word "parties," leaving, however, the expression "heresies" as the marginal reading. The three last words of the verse, "strife," "seditions," "heresies," are, in the American revision, "factions," "divisions," "parties."

289. What Is Justification?

Justification was promised in Christ by the prophet Isaiah when he said (Isa. 45:25): "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory," and is the act of God (Rom. 8:33). Justification was necessary because there was required perfect obedience, which man cannot attain (Lev. 18:5; Rom. 10:5; Job 9:2, 3, 30; Ps. 130:3). Thus some other way had to be found. It is of grace by the imputation of Christ's righteousness earned by the shedding of his blood and sealed by his resurrection. This righteousness we may only take as our own by faith, not by our works, or by faith and works united, but purely by grace through faith (Acts 13:39; 15:1-29; John 5:24; Rom. 3:24; I Cor. 6:11; Isa. 61:10; Rom. 5:18; 5:9; 4:25; I Cor. 15:17). The blessedness of justification is apparent when we consider that it frees from condemnation, entitles to an inheritance and assures glorification (Ps. 32:1, 2; Isa. 50:8, 9; Tit. 3:7; Rom. 8:30).

290. Have Scientists Honored the Bible?

They have. Professor Huxley says: "I have always been strongly in favor of secular education with-

out theology, but I must confess that I have been no less seriously perplexed to know by what practical measures the religious feeling, which is the essential basis of moral conduct, is to be kept up in the present utterly chaotic state of opinion on these matters without the use of the Bible."

291. What Is Redemption?

Redemption is defined by Paul (I Cor. 6:20; I Cor. 7:23) as being bought with a price. It is of God by the blood of Christ, who was sent on earth to effect it for us (Isa. 44:21; Matt. 20:28; Acts 20:28; Heb. 9:12; I Pet. 1:19; Gal. 4:4, 5). And from what are we redeemed? From the bondage of the law and its curse, the power of sin and the grave; all troubles, iniquity, evil, enemies, death and destruction (Gal. 4:5; 3:13; Rom. 6:18, 22; Ps. 49:15; 25:22; 130:8; Gen. 48:16; Jer. 15:21; Hos. 13:14; Ps. 103:4). By reason of our redemption we have justification, forgiveness, adoption and purification and believe it is precious (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7; Gal. 4:4, 5; Tit. 2:14; Ps. 49:8). By it God manifests his power, grace, love and pity (Isa. 50:2; Isa. 52:3; Isa. 63:9; John 3:16). When we have been redeemed we become God's property, his firstfruits, a peculiar people, sealed unto the great day, zealous of good works and walking safely in holiness, commit ourselves to God while awaiting the completion of our redemption, when we shall return to Zion with joy (Isa. 43:1; Rev. 14:4; II Sam. 7:23; Job 19:25; Eph. 4:30; Eph. 2:10; Isa. 35:8, 9; Ps. 31:5; Rom. 8:23; Isa. 35:10).

292. What Is the Origin of the Title Reverend as Applied to Ministers?

Its origin is obscure. It is known to have been in use as early as the thirteenth century. It was a recognized title at the Reformation. The Puritans applied it and Richard Baxter addressed his colaborers in the ministry as "Reverend Brethren." In the early church the ministers were designated as "leaders." The title "reverend," which came into use later, referred to the character of the office rather than to the individual. It dignifies the work rather than the worker. Paul, in calling himself an apostle, glorified his ministry (Rom. 11:13) and this, rightly understood, is the case with "reverend," which, however humble the worker, honors the labor that is performed with a single eye to God's glory and the salvation of men.

293. What Is Sanctification?

Sanctification is that act of the Holy Spirit in which he calls us through the Gospel, enlightens us by his gifts, sanctifies and preserves us in the true faith and moves us to holy works which are pleasing to God (Acts 15:9; Gal. 5:6; Eph. 2:10; Tit. 2:14; I Thess. 4:3; Rom. 15:16; I Cor. 6:11). This sanctification is effected through the atonement of Christ and the work of God, and saints are elected to salvation through it (Heb. 10:10). Sanctification is making sacred, a consecration or devotion of times, places, things or persons (Matt. 23:17, etc.). To sanctify is to render morally pure, to cleanse from sin, to render holy (John 17:17; I Thess. 5:23). This moral purification is in two distinct stages: Its commencement, called regeneration or new birth, and its progressive ac-

compleishment unto ultimate perfection, which progress is sanctification. Regeneration and sanctification mark the progress of the real moral change wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost. The means of sanctification are internal, the indwelling Holy Spirit, faith and the co-operation of the regenerated will with grace and external, as the Word of God, sacraments, prayer, Christian fellowship, and the providential discipline of our heavenly Father. Sanctification should lead to mortification of sin and to holiness (I Thess. 4:3,4; Rom. 6:22; Eph. 5:7-9).

294. What Is the Meaning of Psalm 51:4, "Against Thee, Thee Only Have I Sinned, and Done This Evil in Thy Sight, that Thou Mightest Be Justified When Thou Speakest and Be Clear When Thou Judgest"? Did David Sin for Such a Purpose?

No; his meaning appears to be that his confession was the justification of God's sentence, whatsoever it might be. Suppose a man was on trial for some heinous offense, and the judge pronounced a severe sentence. Some one might say, "That was too long a term," or "I do not believe that man is guilty; the judge should have been more merciful in view of doubt of his guilt." The verdict of the jury might not satisfy such a critic; but if the man had made a full confession of his guilt the judge would be justified or clear. Doubt would be removed, and it would be seen that he had done right in punishing the self-confessed criminal. We know that some commentators hold

that David was permitted to sin in order that God's mercy might be exhibited to the world, but we do not believe that David meant any such thing. Ps. 51 illustrates David's true repentance. It embraces all the stages through which a soul can pass, from conviction of sin to confession, sorrow, prayer for mercy and expression of a lively faith and a strong purpose of amendment. David's character was a complex one; he had many faults and many virtues. His offense, which was the subject of the plea in this psalm, was a very grievous one; but his repentance was deep and thorough. He attempted no concealment of his business, but made full confession before the Lord, and presumably before his own people, who must have understood the meaning of his plea for forgiveness. It is one of a series of prayers for pardon and purifying. He was punished even while he was pardoned.

295. Are the Chronological Figures on the Margins of Bibles Reliable?

The chronological figures which you read in the marginal notes of many Bibles are not an integral part of the Scripture by any means. They were the result of the computations of Archbishop Ussher, an Irish church prelate and distinguished scholar, who lived 1580-1656. They have been both a help and a vexation to Bible students. Taking the birth of Christ (A. D. 1) as a starting-point, Ussher reckoned backward as far as authenticated history permitted. He had no other purpose than to assist scholars in getting a right perspective of historical events prior to that date. Many of his calculations have been upset by the later light thrown on ancient history through archeological

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discoveries, the translation of ancient inscriptions, etc. As to fixing the date of Creation, the first verse of the opening chapter of Genesis still remains unchallenged as the only reference the Bible affords on the subject, viz.: "In the beginning." The Mosaic books nowhere claim that the world was created in 4,000 B. C. In the New Testament John's Gospel opens with the identical phraseology of the Old Testament, showing that in both dispensations the fact is recognized that the date of world creation is beyond human computation.

296. What Are the Cardinal Sins?

The term usually employed is "mortal" or "deadly" sins. The distinction between mortal and venial sins has no Scripture foundation. The seven deadly sins, according to this classification, are pride, anger, envy, sloth, lust, covetousness and gluttony.

297. What Is Sinlessness?

What is sinlessness? The state of being free from sin. What is sin? "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). "The thought of foolishness is sin" (Prov. 24:9). "Sin is lawlessness" (I John 3:4). John Wesley, *Ser.*, Vol. I, p. 15, taught: "Ye are saved from sin. This is the salvation which is through faith. This is that great salvation, foretold by the angel before God brought his first-begotten into the world: 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.' And neither here nor in other parts of Holy Writ is there any limitation or restriction. All that believe in him, he will save from all their sins; from original and actual,

past and present, sin of the flesh and of the spirit. Through faith that is in him they are saved both from the guilt and power of it." Sinlessness is gloriously possible. Adam and Eve, as they came from the hand of God, were sinless (Gen. 1:27-31). If man cannot regain that pristine purity, then Satan has wrought a ruin that Christ cannot repair. "Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly." II Cor. 5:21: "Him who knew no sin he made sin [offering] on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in him." Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering, "through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, and he being dead yet speaketh" (Heb. 11:4). "Enoch was translated that he should not see death; for he had witness borne to him that before his translation he had" (Gen. 5:22) "been pleasing to God" (Heb. 11:5). Enoch walked with God three hundred years. Joseph was a sinless man. "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9; 49:22-26). Daniel, Shadrack, Meshach and Abednego (the first Y. M. C. A.) were lion-proof and fire-proof against sin. Zacharias and Elisabeth "were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Most of these were married and had offspring. Celibacy is not sinlessness (see I Thess. 5:23, 24).

298. What Is the Soul?

This term has been used in a variety of senses by the writers of the Bible. The Old Testament word *nephesh*, literally "that which breathes," corresponds to the New Testament word *psyche*, which is translated

soul or life. (1) It means physical life under natural conditions. "They are dead that sought the young child's life" (Matt. 2:20); "Is not the life more than food?" (Matt. 6:25). (2) It means the life of emotion and desire, including the appetites of hunger and thirst, and the feelings of kindness or hatred. "My soul doth magnify the Lord." Here the word *soul* is used synonymously with *spirit*; they both refer to the emotional life and in a sense correspond to *heart*, which is the seat of all thinking, feeling and willing (Luke 1:46, 47). The word is used in a bad sense as in James 3:16, where jealousy is shown to be a sensual trait, that is psychical, of the soul. (3) It means the self, that which distinguishes one individual from another. "I will say to my soul," that is to myself (Luke 12:19). "Let every soul (person) be in subjection to the higher powers" (Rom. 13:1). (4) It is also used in a religious sense: Paul and Barnabas confirmed the souls of the disciples (Acts 14:22). Hope is an anchor of the soul (Heb. 6:19). In these two instances soul is used synonymously with spirit; but in most cases the distinction is clearly drawn between soul which is natural and spirit which is akin to God. This distinction was first emphasized by Jesus, who helped men to realize the divine life in them and invited them to deepen this spiritual faculty by responding to the gracious appeal of the Spirit of God. But it was Paul who in his Epistles emphasized the supremacy of the spirit.

The soul then is that conscious existence which is made up of desires, impulses, emotions and volitions. It refers to man in his natural state, untouched by the revelation of grace. It is his personality, what he is

in himself, as distinct from all other people. It is the moral man who supports his family, attends to his business, pays his debts and is a respectable member of society. He has, however, not yet reckoned with God who has been revealed by Jesus Christ and so he remains outside the temple of divine fellowship. His life will continue to be imperfect, until he is born again and permits the Spirit of the Eternal, which is the Spirit of Christ, to take possession of him. When this takes place the whole man undergoes a transformation. He feels that the spiritual occupant of the temple of flesh is indeed an immortal guest within, reflecting, in thought, desire, act and disposition, the nature of God. Thus we know that the living soul in man, though undefinable by human terms, partakes of the divine nature and is imperishable.

299. What Is the Difference Between Soul and Spirit?

The terms are frequently used interchangeably, and it is not easy to define the difference. Indeed, some philosophers hold that man is composed of only the two elements—soul and body. But others recognize the distinction which is confirmed by several passages of Scripture, such as I Thess. 5:23. Broadly defined, the soul usually stands for the life, the affections, the will, the consciousness; while the spirit stands for the higher elements by which we apprehend spiritual truth.

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300. What Evil Power Tempted the Angels to Rebel?

While the Scriptures are explicit as to the apostasy of the angels, of whom Satan was the leader, they tell us scarcely anything as to the time, cause and manner of the fall (see Rev. 12:7, 9; II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Matt. 25:41; Luke 10:18; I Tim. 3:6). From these and other collateral evidence it would appear that pride and ambition were the causes. There is, however, a wide difference of opinion among theologians on the matter. Milton, treating the subject from a poetic standpoint, declares that ambition was at the root of the angelic rebellion.

301. Does the Mere Belief that Jesus Christ Is the Son of God Save the Soul?

The soul cannot be saved by belief in any doctrine or truth whatsoever. Nor can it be saved by works. It is Christ and he alone who saves the soul. He has given himself as a ransom for it and by him men may be saved. He who believes this fact has taken the first step. But the step by which the man avails himself of the benefits of Christ's sacrifice is the crucial one, just as a man may believe theoretically in the skill of a physician, but the decisive point is reached when he knows that he is suffering from a mortal disease and commits himself to the care of

that physician, staking all his hope of life on the physician's power to cure him. The soul that trusts Christ to save him, as the sick man trusts the physician, has the faith of which it is said "by grace are ye saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8).

302. Is It Possible to Get Along Spiritually Without the New Birth?

Jesus' interpretation of the "new birth" was that it made people like little children. "Except ye turn and become as little children [R. V.], ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). This corresponds with his remark to Nicodemus (John 3:3): "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." The spirit of childhood is the spirit of his kingdom. He said again (Matt. 19:14; Mark 10:14, and Luke 18:16): "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven" [or "of God"]. The humility, the simplicity, the sincerity, the trustfulness of childhood, these are the things that mark the true citizens of Christ's kingdom. In the face of Christ's statement, then, that children do belong to his kingdom, it is impossible to say that they do not. Unless they lose this state of childhood innocence by unrepented sin, they may continue in his kingdom without a definite crisis of return to it, such as is necessary in the case of adults who have forfeited that innocence. There seem to be well-authenticated cases of men and women of great and undeniable Christian piety who cannot point to any such crisis of regeneration. Such seems to have been the case of young Timothy, to whom Paul wrote: "I call to remembrance the un-

feigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded in thee also " (II Tim. 1:5). What seems to happen, however, in the majority of instances is that the child loses that first innocence by sin, and this awakens a feeling of repugnance toward God and toward spiritual things. In this way the episode of the garden of Eden is repeated again and again; after the child has disobeyed he hides away from God. But if he is led to repent at once he need never have that long, sad experience of wandering which is common to most individuals and which makes necessary the return to God and the restoration of spiritual life in the soul which we call conversion and regeneration.

303. Does the Bible Command to Put the Convicted Murderer to Death Apply to This Age and Nation?

It has been contended by the advocates of capital punishment that, though the command (Gen. 9:6) antedated the Mosaic code, it was intended to survive it. That inference, however, is rather a doubtful and insubstantial ground for so important a matter. It seems probable that if God had intended the practise to continue as a permanent obligation, throughout all time, some more definite and explicit intimation of that permanency would have been given. Whether it is advisable to continue the penalty is a larger question, and there are many weighty reasons for and against it. We ought, however, to have some surer and better reason for putting the murderer to death than that at that early age of the world God

ordered it to be done. If, therefore, any state or nation arrived at the conclusion that the interests of the community might be better served by punishing a murderer in some other way we think it need not be deterred by the ancient command from making the experiment. The statement in Rev. 13:10, "That he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword," does not constitute a law, but it refers to the period of persecution that was to come upon the church. The persecutor would himself suffer, as he had caused the saints to suffer. Nothing would prevent punishment overtaking him. Christ, however, said the same thing (Matt. 26:52) with a more general application. His people were not to depend on warlike weapons for their preservation, for those who relied upon them would perish by the powers they evoked.

304. Is There Any Sanction for Capital Punishment in the New Testament?

The whole spirit of the New Testament would seem to be decidedly against it. Jesus referred to the old standard, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," and replaced it by a higher standard of forgiveness and service (Matt. 5:38-42). By his spiritual discernment and authority he prevented the stoning of a woman convicted of a crime punishable under the Mosaic law by death (John 8:1-11). Paul refers in Rom. 13:4 to the bearing of the sword by the civil power, but this does not necessarily sanction the killing of offenders. He is merely urging Christians to keep the civil law, saying that if they do righteously they will not come into conflict with it.

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There is a wide diversity of opinion concerning capital punishment. In certain countries it has been nominally abolished; yet it is questioned whether in such countries capital crimes have therefore decreased. Under the old Mosaic laws capital punishment was provided for certain classes of offenses. A century ago many crimes were so punished which are now visited by imprisonment instead. The argument against capital punishment is that man has no right to take away that which he cannot either give or restore, and that in depriving a criminal of life we may be also depriving him of the opportunity of repentance and salvation. Many books have been written on the subject, and both sides have been thoroughly canvassed.

305. What Commandment Is the Greatest?

When the Pharisees asked, "What is the greatest commandment in the law?" Jesus replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment, and the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22: 36-40).

306. What Does the Bible Teach Us About Care?

Care, overmuch, about earthly things is forbidden (Matt. 6: 25; Luke 12: 22-29; John 6: 27), for God's providential goodness should keep us from it (Matt. 6: 26, 28, 30; Luke 22: 35), as his promises should prevent it in us (Heb. 13: 5), and trust in God should

free us from care (Jer. 17:7, 8; Dan. 3:16). Our cares should all be cast on God as Peter eloquently advises (I Pet. 5:7), "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you," and the Psalmist triumphantly directs (Ps. 37:5), "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." Care is an obstruction to the Gospel (Matt. 13:22); is unbecoming in saints (II Tim. 2:4); is futile and in vain (II Tim. 2:4; Matt. 6:27; Ps. 39:6). It is sent as a punishment to the wicked (Ezek. 4:16; 12:19), and the saints are warned against it (Luke 21:34): "Take heed lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with cares of this life."

307. Why Should Innocent Children Suffer for the Sins of the Father?

This particular passage is often misunderstood and misinterpreted. The denunciation in Ex. 20:5 does not refer to physical evils, arising from the sins of progenitors, although it is a well-known fact that these, too, through the inflexible law of nature, are visited upon the helpless and innocent. It has a special reference to idolatry. Under the Jewish law, as under all wise and equitable governments, fathers were not permitted to suffer for the children's sins, nor the children for the fathers' offenses, but every one should suffer for his own sin. In the case of idolatry, however, it would seem that God appropriated to himself the execution of his own law, which was designed to discourage that special sin. National rewards and punishments seem inevitably to extend over a single generation, in order to produce any permanent effect.

308. How Do Children Who Die Before Reaching the Age of Responsibility Get into the Kingdom?

In the passage in Rom. 5:18 the sin of Adam and the merits of Christ are pronounced as coextensive; the words in both cases are practically identical: "Judgment came upon all men" and "the free gift came upon all men." If the whole human race be included in the condemnation for original sin, then the whole race must also be included in the justification through Christ's sacrifice. Children dying in infancy, before the age of understanding or moral responsibility, are all partakers of this inclusive justification. Were it otherwise, a very large proportion of the human race would have no share in this "free gift," but would be condemned for sin, which they never committed, which is contrary to the divine characteristics of love and justice, contrary to the apostolic teachings, and contrary to the spirit and language of the Master himself, who said of the innocent children: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." This is the general, though not exclusive, attitude of theology today on this matter. Faith always presupposes knowledge and power to exercise it, and as a little child has neither, it has no moral responsibility. Even so stern a theologian as Calvin held practically this view. Any other conception of God would make him a Moloch instead of a loving Father.

309. What Does the Bible Teach of the Second Coming of Christ?

That Christ is to come a second time was foretold by the prophets and by Christ himself, as well as by

the apostles and the angels (Dan. 7:13; Matt. 25:31; Acts 3:20; Acts 1:10, 11). It is called, among others, "time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," "of restitution of all things" and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour (Tit. 2:13; Acts 3:19, 21). The time thereof is unknown, but the signs which are to precede it are fully set out (Matt. 24:36). In his second coming Christ shall appear in the clouds, in his own glory and that of the Father. He shall come suddenly, unexpectedly, with a shout and voice of the Archangel, with power and great glory and accompanied by angels and his saints (Matt. 24:30; Mal. 16:27; Matt. 25:31; II Thess. 1:8; Matt. 24:30; I Thess. 4:16; Mark 13:36). At his coming the heavens and earth shall be dissolved and those who sleep shall rise, they who shall have died in Christ shall rise first, while the saints alive at the time shall be caught up to meet him (II. Pet. 3:10, 12; I Thess. 4:16, 17). The purposes of the second coming are to complete the salvation of saints, to be glorified in them, be admired by them that believe, judge the earth and reign over it after bringing to light the hidden things of darkness (Heb. 9:28; II Thess. 1:10; I Cor. 4:5; Ps. 50:3, 4; Rev. 20:11-13). The saints being assured of this second coming, love it, look for, await, haste unto, and pray for it. They shall therefore be preserved unto it, shall be blameless at it, shall be like him, shall not only see him but shall reign with him (Job 19:25; II Tim. 4:8; Phil. 3:20; I Cor. 1:7; II Pet. 3:12; Matt. 24:24; Matt. 24:42, 44; Phil. 1:6; I Cor. 1:8; Phil. 3:21; I John 3:2; Col. 2:4; Dan. 7:27). The wicked who scoff at it and presume upon its delay shall be surprised by

this second coming and shall be punished while the man of sin is to be destroyed (II Pet. 3:3, 4; Matt. 24:48; Matt. 24:37-39; II Thess. 1:8, 9).

310. Will All the World Be Converted Before the Second Coming of Christ?

We need not expect to see the world converted before the Lord's return. This is the age of the Gentiles. The age during which God is seeking out a people for his name. The calling out of the church to become the bride of his Son (Acts 15:14). Again, the conditions which the word of God describes to precede his coming are not what we would find in a converted nation. His disciples asked him for a sign of his coming. He did not tell them, when you see a converted world. No. His answer was: "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars." "Nation shall rise against nation." "Love of many shall wax cold." "False prophets shall arise, and deceive many." "As the days of Noah were," etc. (Matt. 24:34-41). Again, Paul speaks of the great apostasy which shall mark the time of the end; also of the Antichrist, the man of sin (II Thess. 2:3; I Tim. 4:1. See also I John 2:18). Remember, "All these are the beginning of sorrows." Christ's coming will bring with it the millennial reign. He will introduce the age when nations will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks (Isa. 2:2-4). This seems to have been the view of the primitive church. It has among its many able supporters Dean Alford, Prof. Delitzsch, Dr. Tregelles, and Dr. Bonar. Others, however, think otherwise. Thus it has been suggested that our faith in God

should lead us to believe that the world will be converted before Christ comes. To believe otherwise would imply the thought of such a failure in God's plans as is inconceivable. The predictions in the Epistles and the Revelation appear to favor the opposite view, but perhaps they were not intended to be accepted literally. One reason for thinking so is that they imply battle and wholesale destruction of Christ's enemies, which is inconsistent with his character. The conversion of the world seems an achievement so stupendous as to be impossible; but so did the situation today seem to be nineteen hundred years ago. Who could have thought that the little company of a hundred and twenty unlettered, obscure men and women, who gathered together after Christ's death, would grow into the enormous number who today own him as their Lord? The influence of Christian nations is growing at a prodigious rate, and it is not inconceivable that, when it culminates, there may be such an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that millions will be brought into the kingdom in a year. God is not willing that any should perish, and we believe that, having undertaken the work of redemption, he will succeed in his own way and time, and that eventually there will be a generation which shall be entirely Christian, and there will be a time when every knee shall bow and every tongue own Jesus as Lord.

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311. Is a Person a Christian Who Has Never Felt Any Sudden Conviction of Sin or Emotional Change Which Could Be Called Conversion?

Sorrow over sin and an effort to amend are Christian duties, but do not make a person a Christian. Neither do the sudden conviction of sin and emotional change, though they may accompany, or precede, the new birth, by which a person becomes a Christian. As you will see by Christ's own explanation to Nicodemus (John 3:3-21), the new birth is the work of the Holy Spirit, which is given freely to all who seek. When a person ardently desires to become a Christian he asks Christ to save him, not only from future punishment, but from present sin. He should believe in Christ's power to do so, and should confidently place his case in Christ's hands as he would place his case in the hands of a physician if he were sick. The effort to amend will then take new shape, because Christ's life and strength will be imparted and victory assured. Christ promises to dwell in the heart of any who desire his presence and will yield themselves to him. With Christ in the heart there will be new life, and by union with him the person becomes a Christian.

312. Why Was It Necessary for Christ to Come into the World if Men Were Being Saved Before He Came?

The fact of Christ's coming and suffering and dying should preclude all thought of such a question. If God so loved the world as to give his only be-

gotten Son, you may depend that there was supreme need for it. In Christ the types and sacrifices of the Jewish dispensation found their fulfilment as well as their culmination. Without him and his life and death they would have been empty, meaningless forms. Besides all this Christ came to reveal the Father to the world. If all that we owe to Christ and his Gospel to-day were eliminated from the world, the gloom and poverty and hopelessness of life would be appalling.

313. What State of Society Would Prevail if the Christian Ideal of Hope Was Realized and Every One Now Living Were to Become True Christians?

In the ideal Christian commonwealth there would be an end to trade competition of the sort which drives many to the wall that a few may thrive. Employers would treat employees equitably and even generously, and the latter would return this treatment in faithful, intelligent service. There would be no corners, pools or combinations. No speculative market to rule the prices of crops, coal and other commodities; no stock speculation in the Wall Street sense, and no vast fortunes would be possible, since each member of society would employ all his energies and resources for the uplift and improvement of the whole community. Interest and usury would be unknown. Taxes would be such only as were needed to administer the community's affairs and do its actual work. Legitimate enterprise would develop the highest resources of nature for the benefit of all. Love would make each the servant of the whole, and

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the servant would be honored by all. Art, science and a varied culture would flourish, and the general intellectual horizon would widen, as the hard struggle no longer engrossed man's time, strength and physical and mental energies. Leaders and followers there still would be, of course, but there could be neither a rich nor a poor class. Money might and possibly would survive the change, but it would no longer be the magnet of mankind and the source of so much evil. And the love of Christ and his service would sweeten the new life to all who were participants in it.

314. Is There a Point Beyond Which Christ Cannot Save?

In Heb. 10:26 the apostle describes the hesitancy of certain people (professing Christians) in reference to their confidence of faith. Professor Bernhard Weiss, commenting on this passage, says this lack of faith and hesitancy "to the consummation of redemption Paul regarded as a sinning against better knowledge and conscience, in the case of those who have received the knowledge of the truth of redemption. For sinners of this kind the Old Covenant already had no sacrifices; how much less did the New Covenant have such, in which there is only the one sacrifice of Christ, in which those who do not trust this sacrifice with the confidence of faith have no part at all."

315. Is It True that No One Is Won to Christ Except Through the Efforts of Some Other Person?

We think not, in the literal sense. Take the case of the sudden conversion of Paul as an illustration.

Certainly it could not be said that he was brought to a saving knowledge of Christ through the efforts of any person. Dr. L. J. Birney, in an address some time ago before a religious gathering at Indianapolis, spoke of Dr. Durbin as having laid down the same general proposition. There are doubtless many who come into the light through the reading of the Scriptures and prayer; yet, in a remote and impersonal sense, they may be said to have been influenced, perhaps unconsciously, by the experience and example of others. Hence, if we critically investigate each case of conversion within our knowledge, it will be generally found, except in very rare instances where the connection is untraceable, that they have been led by the influence of others. By way of illustrating the remarkable and far-reaching power of human influence, Dr. Durbin on one notable occasion made this statement: "If Peter had won three thousand souls every day after Pentecost, and if his apostolic successors had had religion enough to do the same thing, it would have taken a thousand years to bring the world to Christ as the world was in Peter's day, and there would have been thirty new generations unaccounted for; but if each of the three thousand had gone out to save one a year, and each new disciple had done the same, the entire world would have been reached for Jesus Christ a whole generation before the Gospel of John was written."

316. Will God Cast Any Away Who Confesses His Sins to Him?

"Him that cometh unto me I will *in no wise* cast out." Look up those words, in John 6: 37; read them

till they are so vividly photographed upon your inner eye that they shall keep repeating themselves to your brain and finding their healing way down to your troubled heart. Already you *know* they are true, but your will refuses to let go and rest upon them. They are surer than anything else in the world. Even standing alone they are wonderful enough to bring any soul to peace, but they are backed up by the whole story of the life and death of Jesus, by the gracious messages of his apostles and the promises of his prophets. That is the kind of a God we have, "who forgiveth *all* thine iniquities." We cannot repeat too often our universal remedy for troubled souls: "Trusting Jesus, that is *ALL*!" It is understood that before we can really believe that he forgives us we must be willing so far as possible to make right any wrongs we have done to others (see Matt. 5:23), and to determine to forsake our sins. But to the soul who will "confess and forsake" his sin there is nothing so sure in all the world as that God will "abundantly pardon."

317. Is It Possible for Any One, in the Gospel Dispensation and Not Believing in Christ, to Be Saved?

We can set no limit to the mercy and pardoning power of God. In all ages and in every nation he has raised up witnesses to himself. If the question refers to one who, living in Gospel times and having heard the message of salvation, wilfully ignores or rejects it, we might have reasonable doubts, although we are not to judge in such matters; but if he be in a portion of the world still in heathen darkness the

case is different. To deny the possibility of salvation to the heathen who have never heard the Gospel is opposed to the spirit of both the Old Testament and New Testament. The earliest Christian teachings held that the Holy Spirit exerted an influence upon the unevangelized by means of reason, and that those who lived pure, upright lives before God might be called, justified and saved. Justin Martyr, Clement, and still later Zwingli, taught this doctrine, and believed that the moral and pure among the heathen might be accepted for the sake of Christ's finished work and atonement. Job was an Arab, of a heathen race; yet he is represented as a man of perfect integrity and under divine protection and blessing. See Paul's exposition in Rom. 2:14, 26, 27, which holds that those not being under the law (of Christ) may be a law unto themselves.

318. Is a Man Who Is Spiritually Dead Responsible for Not Accepting Christ?

A man is responsible if he rejects the offer of Christ, because he is physically alive and knows what he is doing. The offer of Christ is "Arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee life" (Eph. 5:14). The Holy Spirit is a quickener and it will be given to those who ask for it. Suppose a man is dead to art. The most beautiful picture or statue does not appeal to him. Some artist makes his acquaintance and shows him the beauty of color, teaches him how to recognize the perfection of form. That side of his nature becomes alive and he learns to appreciate the beauty of art. The influence of Christ is infinitely greater. The man who desires to be saved mourns

over the deadness of his nature and prays to be quickened, and Christ speedily quickens him. It is true that salvation is God's work, but he does not force it upon an unwilling man. Christ came that men, though they were dead, might have life (John 11: 25).

319. What Can We Say to Those Who Seem Unreconcilable to the Loss of a Dear One Through Death?

What can we say to these friends? In the first place, they must quickly and with intense determination seek God. They may feel that their minds are almost shattered by the crushing blow, but the one steady fact upon which to rest in the midst of all the anguish is God himself. Or it may be that instead of sharp agony some feel a terrible weariness and bewilderment. They, too, must seek God for his rest. It is a time for creeping into "the secret place of the Most High, and abiding under the shadow of the Almighty." They will begin to realize something of the depth and strength of God's great love for them, a love even greater than their love for the dear one who has gone. They will think of the cross of Christ, where God showed so unmistakably his love for mankind. They will see Christ going through that strange experience of death, and coming out untouched by it, untouched except to be glorified. Then they will see Christ "sitting at the right hand of God"—and know that out in that other world their loved ones are safe with him. They will realize again that the abiding things in human life are thought and love and character; they will know that their dear ones have not

lost those things which made them dear, but have only laid aside the garment of flesh and gone out into the world of the spirit, their true home and ours. Most wonderful and blessed of all, they may come to feel, as many have come to feel, that those whom we call dead are nearer to us than ever before—no one knows how near. A young man who recently lost his wife bears testimony that he is sure she knows what he is doing and how he and the children are getting along. May we not find, after all, that the real world is not the world of clay and stones and wood and flesh, but that all the atmosphere and ether are the real abiding places and working places of human spirits, that even the stars are nothing but the golden nails in God's home and that the house itself is all that we call "space," in which there is ample room for all the spirits who have ever lived and shall live hereafter? But at any rate we may know Jesus, Master of life and death, and know that our loved ones and ourselves are safe in his strong and sympathetic keeping. Tell these friends that "his grace is sufficient" even for their time of bitter anguish. Tell them to come close to him and thus get in closest possible communion with those who have passed out of sight. Tell them he will give them strength to bear this burden of grief, and enable them to lead others to the rest of faith they have found.

320. Are Disasters, Such as Great Fires, Storms, Floods and Destruction, Judgments from God?

Although all human experience and divine revelation teach us that God punishes the wicked who do not

repent and turn to him, we are not justified in assuming that visitations of the character referred to are in any sense to be regarded as in this category. Indeed, Christ plainly rebuked such a conclusion, when he referred to the persecution of the Galileans, and the disaster at Siloam (Luke 13:1-4). Nature has her divinely adjusted laws; and the world moves in obedience to these laws. Greater wisdom would teach us not to live in localities that are obviously liable to be inundated, or overwhelmed by landslides; and to build of such material, and in such manner that risks from conflagration will be minimized. In a majority of cases, however, human foresight seems utterly powerless to provide against or to escape from such happenings, and we must be content to regard them as the result of natural law, to which the righteous and the wicked are alike subject, "as the rain falleth on the just and the unjust." There have been instances, as in a railroad disaster, in which good people have been killed and wicked people have escaped. Christians must not expect immunity from injury and accident, nor must the wicked conclude that because they escape, God is indifferent to their evil deeds. God expects us to trust in him and wait the time when all these mysteries shall be explained. In the meantime, as in the case of Job, we should be adding cruelty to misery if we hastily assumed that those who suffer most have sinned most grievously. The opposite is often true. God is not settling accounts with men in this life. That will be done at the judgment. In the same way, the wars, accidents, wrecks, etc., may be the direct result of human negligence or wrongdoing, but we must not regard God as an indifferent spectator

of the events in his world. There is an overruling Providence that turns evil to good results in spite of evil intentions on man's part. We cannot always explain it, and some providences seem mysterious, but we cannot be surprised at our not being able to fathom God's purposes. From what we do know, we must conclude that those we do not know are also good and wiser than we can conceive.

321. Do the Scriptures Sanction Divorce for Any Cause?

It would seem as if there were a discrepancy between the doctrine as enunciated in Mark 10: 11, 12 and that in Matt. 5: 32. The rule of interpretation is that when two writers report the same speech and one is fuller than the other, the one who gives the fullest report is to be deemed the more accurate. It is more likely that the one writer omitted a sentence than that the other inserted something that never was uttered. Following this rule, Matthew's report is more likely to be accurate than Mark's. If you will turn to Matt. 5: 32 you will see that Christ made an exception in the case of a person who had been false to the marriage vow. He did not require one partner to live with another who had been unfaithful. Then we may also ask whether the Scriptures sanction divorce on the ground of desertion. This is a disputed question. The only passage dealing with it is I Cor. 7: 10-15. Whether the apostle there means that the person who, he says, "is not in bondage" is entitled to marry again during the lifetime of the deserting partner, is doubtful. It seems unreasonable, however, that a man deserted by his wife, or a wife deserted by her husband, should be precluded

from making a second marriage by the misconduct of another. It generally happens, too, that there is good reason for suspecting that desertion is not the only offense against the marriage tie that the deserting partner has committed, but as it is sometimes impossible to furnish proof of the fact, while desertion can be easily proved, most of the churches sanction divorce for desertion; but direct and explicit sanction from the Scriptures there is none.

322. Are Ecclesiastical Entertainments Permissible as a Means of Raising Money for Church Support?

Our churches should be sustained by voluntary offerings. "Freely ye have received, freely give." Throughout the Bible God's acceptance of gifts, whether for the Temple service or in apostolic times, seems to have been in proportion to the willingness with which they were offered. In Ex. 25:1, Moses is told to accept whatever is "offered willingly with the heart," and in Christ's commendation of the poor widow who gave two mites the teaching clearly is, that it is the spirit in which the gift is made more than the value of the gift itself that makes it acceptable to God. "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not," and so far is this willing spirit to go that we are even to provide in advance for our gifts. "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store," etc. Ecclesiastical entertainments for raising money ignore this truth so plainly taught, being based on the assumption that we are not willing to give to God's cause without getting

something in return for ourselves. So questionable a method of raising money has first an evil effect on outsiders, in that it leads to the belief that one branch of the church's work is to make money and another to provide entertainment. A further argument against these entertainments—such as bazaars, etc.—is that they are not even conducted on sound business principles, which goes far to belittle the church in the eyes of the world. Second, this class of entertainment has an evil effect upon the church itself, as it brings to the front the members least spiritually minded and gives them a controlling interest in its affairs; it diverts attention from the legitimate work of the church; it arouses jealousies; it accentuates class distinctions; it places too much stress upon the value of money for conducting religious work; it cannot compete with similar attractions held by secular organizations; it obliterates the line that should always exist between the church and the world.

323. Is It Right for a Church to Open Its Doors for Fairs, Concerts and Suppers When the Building Has Been Dedicated to God for Pure Worship?

While the social side of church life should be cultivated, it is desirable that fairs, suppers and similar matters having in no direct sense a spiritual side should be held elsewhere. There are, however, some social features that may with perfect propriety be held in the church building, such as concerts of a proper character, lectures and the like. If we apply the test of conscience in such matters and ask ourselves whether the holding of any special gathering within

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church walls is derogatory of the sacred purposes to which the building is dedicated, a decision will not be difficult to reach. The good sense of pastor, elders and managers should be exercised to prevent the use of the church rooms for anything that savors of levity or disrespect, or that has not for its object the furtherance of God's purposes and the spread of the Gospel.

324. Is the Use of Unfermented Wine at the Communion in Accordance with the Teaching of Christ?

There is no record of Christ having said anything on the subject. The broad principles he laid down, however, apply to many questions that at that time were not pressing. Concern for the welfare of others he certainly regarded as a duty. That concern at the present time may surely take into account the position of a man who was formerly a drunkard, and who may find his desire for intoxicants aroused by tasting fermented wine at communion. Sympathy with him and a desire to shield him from temptation, and save him from the pain of a struggle with his old enemy, is thus in accord with Christ's principles, and may legitimately find expression in using unfermented wine at the sacrament.

325. How Often Are We to Forgive a Person Who Has Wronged Us?

Our duty is to cultivate a forgiving disposition. There is no doubt that when the wrongdoer repents, we ought to forgive him, even though it be seventy times seven times that he has offended. Toward the hardened offender who does not repent, we ought to feel

more pity than animosity. It may be that for his own sake forgiveness should be withheld. It is good for some men that they should be taught by a sharp lesson that they must not misbehave. But under all that, the Christian ought to exercise a kindly feeling toward the wrongdoer, ought not to be vindictive, and should be ready to forgive when he shows contrition. We believe that God loves the sinner while hating his sin, and we should try to be like him in that. We, who have done so much for which we hope God will forgive us, can surely afford to forgive those who have injured us. The man who has done the injury and is not penitent is in the greater need of forgiveness, though he is not entitled to it. We should pity him.

326. Is There Forgiveness for One Who Sins Over and Over Again After Having Been Forgiven?

In Isa. 55:7 we are told that God will abundantly pardon, and that means that God will forgive just as long as there is sincere repentance. The danger for one repeatedly sinning is not that God will not forgive, but rather that by sinning one places himself where there is no more conscience of sin. God's mercy is unlimited both as to time and quantity and is well told in Matt. 18:21-35; Luke 17:3, 4; Isa. 1:18; Mic. 7:18, 19. But constant sinning against conscience hardens the heart and benumbs the conscience. There may be, to the end, sorrow exercised because of the consequences of sin, but to him who continues to sin the conscience becomes at last benumbed, so that while it mourns over the results, it still loves the sinning and is not offended by it. Continuous sinning should lead

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one to self-examination and humility. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out," says Jesus. God will abundantly pardon all those who forsake their ways and return to the Lord—but we must come, must return and we must come as did the Publican—humble.

327. Is the Doctrine of the Second Work of Grace a True Scriptural Teaching?

We should be assuming an unwarrantable authority if we answered the question categorically. Brethren whom we honor and who are undoubtedly sincere believe that it is Scriptural. Who are we, that we should say it is not? We can only give you our opinion which you must take for what it is worth. Our belief, then, is that sanctification is a gradual process, lasting all through our lives; that we are always receiving new light, new strength to overcome temptation and new grace to live more like Christ. We believe that at no time is it safe to relax our vigilance and that the time never comes when we attain absolute perfection, or immunity from the possibility of falling into sin. We believe that progress in the divine life is not uniform in its rate, but under favorable circumstances such as a season of special retirement and prayer and association with godly brethren we may make greater progress than at others. But we do not believe in sudden miraculous changes which would make the soul impervious to sin.

328. What Is the Fate of the Jews Who Have Passed Away Since the Death of Christ?

It would be pure speculation to answer a question concerning the ultimate fate of the Jews who have

passed away since the death of Christ. We have no right to judge men; judgment belongs to God alone. Besides, in all ages he has raised up witnesses to himself in the persons of godly men and women who, although they might never have heard the Gospel message, have lived according to their highest lights in a way that may have been acceptable, and whose faith has been accounted to them for righteousness.

329. Do the Promises as to Immunity from Snake-bite and Poison Belong to All Believers Now as in Christ's Time?

Though the passage in Mark 16:17, 18 appears to refer the promises to all believers, the facts prove that they do not. A Christian taking up a venomous serpent or drinking poison would undoubtedly suffer as a man would who is not a Christian. In the days when the promise was given, a handful of unlettered men were going out to preach to an unbelieving world and needed special miraculous power to help them in their testimony. These powers were granted for that special purpose. If you are thinking of making a personal test we would strongly urge you to consider before doing so whether Christ's words (Matt. 4:8) do not apply in the case. At the same time there is no doubt that one who *accidentally* gets into difficulty of this kind may well call upon the Lord and reminding him of his promises, expect and receive absolute relief.

330. Are We Still Under the Law?

It is impossible to explain the teachings of the New Testament on this subject such as Gal. 3 and 4 without recognizing two distinct meanings of the word

“law,” as applied to the old dispensation. It meant both the *moral* law and the *ceremonial* law. The New Testament is very clear in teaching that from the ceremonial law the believer in Christ is set free. Christ put an end to the sacrifices and ceremonies of the Temple when he became the sacrificial Lamb for the sins of the whole world. The 15th chapter of Acts shows how the first church council set the Gentile Christians free from the obligations of the ceremonial law, even the fundamental ordinance of circumcision. When we come to the moral law the explanation is more difficult. Paul says: “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid. Yea, we *establish* the law” (Rom. 3:31). The moral law was never abrogated. Paul’s argument is that law in itself has no power to make a man good; but Christ has that power. Christ takes the law and fills it full of life and love. He transforms the soul so that it loves the Lawgiver, and loves every individual for whose protection the law was given. For instance: is the Christian *under* the law against murder? He has no such sensation, no such consciousness. He does not want to murder anybody. By Christ’s power he has been made to love his neighbor and he knows that he must continue to love him. Love solves the problem of the moral law; love gives the law a power it never had before. “Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. 13:10). In a sense this was taught in the Mosaic law, as both Christ and Paul pointed out, but Christ brought a new interpretation and a new power. So we may be said to be living under his law, as Paul expressed it: “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.

6:2). We are in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, who brings to our hearts the experience of loving God (Rom. 5:5), and who makes us truly love our neighbor.

331. Why Does the Lord Seem So Much Nearer and Dearer at Some Times than at Others?

Even perfect Christians are sometimes "in heaviness through manifold temptations" or trials. The human brain is such a delicate organ, and the human body so imperfect, that many times the things we are surest about become obscure; in sleep, for instance, or in extreme fatigue, or suffering, or even nervousness. Our chief concern must be to keep free from sin. We may be cleansed and kept clean by the blood of Christ; and while we are trusting him for cleansing, we shall be, under normal conditions, conscious of his presence.

332. Are There Any People Without a Conception of a Supreme Being?

Missionaries and other travelers affirm that nowhere on the globe is there a people who have no conception of worship of some sort, the sole possible exception being the natives of the Solomon Islands, who are said by some writers to have been absolutely without any idea of a Supreme Being, or any kind of worship, when first discovered by white men. Even idolatry must be regarded in a sense as an apprehension of an overruling Power, though a perverted one. The contention of skeptics that we have no right to enlighten the heathen cannot be maintained; for, if it be conceded that it is our duty to help our fellow men in any

degree, we certainly should strive to enlighten them on the most vital of all questions: that which affects their happiness here and hereafter. Besides, Christians are commanded to "preach the Gospel to all the world."

333. Is Anything Too Hard or Difficult for God?

The day of miracles is not past. The question, "Is anything too hard or impossible for God?" is apt to be misleading. While it is true that nothing is impossible for God, yet it is also true that God seems always to work according to method, or law. When the flying machine was invented, no laws of gravity were superseded; they were simply recombined with other laws, just as the magnet seems to break law, but does not. So with radium; it appears to break and change other principles, but in reality only readjusts and reapplies them. In his miracles Christ made use of a new power, but did not set aside the laws of the universe. We never hear of a lost limb or member being made to grow again. Christ restored the ear of the high priest's servant not, doubtless, by making another ear grow, but by rejoining the severed member to its place—a thing which surgeons now occasionally do in their regular practise. An eye injured could probably not be restored to normal condition, any more than if the eye had been lost another could be made to grow in its place. But foreign growths have been removed; germs dislodged; weak organs strengthened—by Christ's miraculous power in response to the prayer of faith. And, while not neglecting any human skill or aid or material means, we should be constantly expecting from God greater things

rather than less, and may come to find that even things we had called impossible are after all included in his plan.

334. Is There Intercession Needed Between Us and God?

The full price of the world's salvation was paid by Christ on the cross. After a soul has once heard of Christ and his atonement, he needs no other help in approaching God than that of the divine Saviour. The New Testament is full of emphatic statements of the absolute sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice. There is "one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." This is the message of the whole book of Hebrews. Read especially the first seven chapters (see also I Cor. 1:30; Rom. 5; II Cor. 5:18-21; Gal. 1:3-9; Gal. 3; Gal. 5:1-6; Gal. 6:14, 15, etc., etc.) After we are regenerated, no one can possibly be nearer to us than Christ is. It surely seems, to say the very least, extremely foolish to ask any one else to convey a message to him for us when he himself is nearer than any one else can be.

335. Is a Marriage Ceremony of Any Real Value?

In Gen. 2:22 God brought about the first marriage by bringing Eve to Adam. By what ceremony this was done we are not told, but that there was some sort of preliminaries to the union there can be no doubt as is indicated by the injunction in verse 24 and the solemn enunciation of the principles of the bond. In early times one of the essential things in marriage seems to have been the coming of the bride from her father's house to that of her husband or his father. Betrothal

accompanied by more or less ceremony preceded this. In Ezek. 16:8-14; Mal. 2:14; Prov. 2:17; Gen. 24:57-60; Ruth 4:9-13 we have examples of the customs common to the occasions. In Jesus' time the ceremonies appear to have been observed as is indicated by his numerous references to wedding feasts; for instance, such as are found in Matt. 22:3; Matt. 22:11; Luke 12:36; 14:8; and by his participation in a wedding feast at Cana. The right of wife and children and the demands of good government necessitate such formality in the marriage ceremony as will give to the married state that dignity and solemnity which is essential to the inviolability of the act. The use made of marriage as a symbol of union between Christ and his church (Rom. 7:4; Gal. 3:27; Isa. 54:4-6; 61:10; 62:3-5; Rev. 21:1; 19:7-9) indicates that there is more to the marriage than a mere contract between two parties and that in God's sight it is the holiest state. Such holy relation should, in deference to posterity and the public good, be initiated by a ceremony of public character and record.

336. Is the Marriage of a Protestant with a Catholic Advisable?

Marriage with Christians is not merely to be a physical union, but a union and communion of souls. This is the essential requirement and only sure guarantee for a happy marriage. Difficulties and disagreements do and must arise, if the marriage is blessed with children and a decision is to be made in which church and faith they are to be reared. Disagreeing, as Protestants and Romanists do, in the most fundamental truths of the Christian religion, they lack all mutual basis for

religious exercise, even prayer, and particularly in the days of adversity must suffer grievously because of the cleavage existing between them in the things of highest moment in their spiritual life. Read Rom. 16: 17; II Cor. 6: 14-18; I Cor. 7: 16 and ponder whether these admonitions do not also apply to the entering into so close a union as that of marriage by those who in their religious conceptions and convictions, and hence in their entire view of life, are so far apart as are Romanists and Protestants. Experience proves that what is stated in Gen. 6: 2 with reference to the children of God uniting in marriage with the children of the world applies also to marriages of Protestants to Romanists, *i. e.*, that such unions very frequently result in both falling into religious indifference, spiritual death. Either there will be a persistent effort by one or the other spouse seeking to convert the other to what is held to be the true faith, or for the sake of external peace both will drop all religion. If the Protestant agrees to a Catholic marriage he by that very act acquiesces in the Roman Catholic doctrine of marriage being a sacrament which none other than a Roman Catholic priest can validly perform and that every other marriage is at best a legal concubinage. Thereby he places the stigma of concubinage upon his own parents if their marriage was not solemnized by a Roman Catholic priest, and confesses himself illegitimate. On the other hand, the Catholic party to such marriage must ever hold her marriage to be nothing else but concubinage and her entire marital life a sin in the sight of God, should her marriage not have been consecrated by a Roman Catholic priest. Surely no steadfast Protestant could ever promise to have his children

brought up in a church and faith whose most fundamental teachings he holds to be a denial of divine truth depriving Christ of his true glory and sinful mankind of all true peace, the assurance of reconciliation with God and of that precious liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

337. What Are the Limits of Ecclesiastical Proscription of Marriage?

By Levitical law the prohibited degrees included direct relatives in both ascending and descending lines, of the whole and of the half blood, children who had the same parents or parent, the brothers and sisters of fathers or mothers, brothers' wives, daughters-in-law, a woman and her daughter, or other descendant, in the third generation and the sister of a wife during her lifetime. By Lev. 18 where these degrees are set out, the analogy to relatives there mentioned may be applied to others equally close of which, however, nothing is said. In the early church a still stricter rule of prohibited degrees was a part of canonical law. Thus the Emperor Theodosius I forbade the marriage of first cousins which the earlier Roman law permitted. The Greek and Roman churches went even further. The Roman Catholic Church carried the prohibition to the seventh degree, but in 1216 Innocent III cut it down to the fourth, and a little while after Gregory IX modified Innocent's rule that a marriage between a third and fourth cousin was allowable. The council of Trent further mitigated the restrictions. According to the canons of the Greek Church a man may not marry his second cousin's daughter, his deceased wife's first or second cousin

nor his deceased wife's first cousin's daughter. Two brothers may not marry two sisters, an aunt and a niece, two first cousins. A man may not marry his wife's brother's wife's sister, his brother-in-law's wife nor can his own brother marry her. The feeling lying at the bottom of all these prohibitions was the pretension of a moral principle to promote chastity. Another consideration is that the marriage of near relatives promotes neither the health nor the multitude of offspring. Besides these reasons it might be urged that to marry out of one's near relationship binds families together and diffuses the feeling of brotherhood through neighborhoods and tribes. Besides enacting laws against the marriage of blood relations, states have sometimes prohibited men from connecting themselves with women who sustain toward them the closest degrees of affinity. Some countries make it unlawful to marry a wife's sister. There are no valid arguments against such unions from Scripture, but rather, when it is said (Lev. 18:18) that a man shall not have two sisters as his wives, the inference is that Jewish law allowed marriage to one of them after the death of the other and preceding wife. Marriage to a brother's widow or deceased husband's brother is more doubtful. Yet in the canonical law the Pope can probably give a dispensation. Such was the case of Henry VIII of England. Some church bodies, however, inhibit marriages between both of these affinity degrees.

338. Is a Religious Marriage Ceremony Necessary?

Early in the history of the Jewish race (as their sacred books show) it was considered advisable that a

priest or rabbi should perform the marriage ceremony, as important religious questions had to be put to the bridal pair which only a learned man could do. In the first centuries (A. D.) Christian marriages were solemnized by the clergy, but there were many exceptions. There was no prescribed form, and the public ceremonies apparently were not regarded as essential by the early Christians. There is no record preserved of the first marriage by a minister. Marriage ceremonies that are not performed by regularly ordained pastors in the case of a religious ceremony, or by the authorized official in civil marriages, are irregular and unrecognized by the courts and the community. Such ceremonies, if undertaken in jest, are a mockery of the sacred ordinance, and in the worst possible taste. No Christian can afford to have a share in such follies. "Mock marriages" are usually prolific of evil to all concerned, and unsolemnized, irregular marriages usually result in leaving the wife at the mercy of one who should have begun the new relation by surrounding her with every honorable safeguard and protection.

339. Were Miracles Wrought by Other Men of God Before and Since Christ?

Yes, indeed. By Moses and Aaron as follows: Rod turned into a serpent and restored again; hand made leprous and restored again; the various plagues in Egypt, such as water turned into blood; frogs, lice, flies, boils, locusts and darkness brought; the first-born destroyed; the Red Sea divided (see Ex. 4-12). Joshua divided the waters of Jordan, took Jericho, stayed sun and moon and destroyed the Midianites (Josh. 3, 4, 10 and Judg. 7: 16-22). Samson killed a lion and

Philistines, carried away the gates of Gaza and pulled down the house of Dagon (Judg. 14 and 16). Elijah brought on a drought, multiplied meal and oil, restored a child to life, brought rain and divided the waters of Jordan (I Kings 17, 18; II Kings 2:8). Elisha divided the waters of Jordan, multiplied oil, restored a child to life, healed Naaman, caused iron to swim and restored a man to life (II Kings 2:14, 21; II Kings 4:17; 32-35; II Kings 5:10, 14; II Kings 6:6; II Kings 13:21). The apostles and seventy disciples performed miracles (Luke 10:9, 17; Acts 2:43; Acts 5:12). Peter cured a lame man, healed the sick, made Æneas whole and restored Dorcas to life (Acts 3:7; Acts 5:15, 16; Acts 9:34; Acts 9:40). Stephen and Philip wrought miracles (Acts 6:8; Acts 8:6, 7, 13), and Paul cured a lame man, cast out an unclean spirit, made the bite of a viper harmless, restored Eutychus to life and healed the father of Publius (Acts 14:10; Acts 16:18; Acts 20:10-12; Acts 28:5, 8).

340. Have All the Prophecies Been Fulfilled?

All the prophecies have not yet been fulfilled, notably those that refer to the restoration of the Jews and other far-reaching predictions of the Old Testament prophets. The Messianic prophecies, especially those relating to the coming of the kingdom, are now, commentators hold, in process of fulfilment. The Gospel has not yet been preached to all the nations of the world. There are parts of Central Asia, some parts of China and almost all of Tibet, together with portions of Central Africa, the Sahara tribes and parts of South America, still unevangelized. It is the imperative duty

of the church of Christ to hasten this work, which Jesus himself laid down as one of the principal tasks of his followers.

341. When Furnishing References to a Prospective Employer, Am I Morally Bound to Disclose Facts Derogatory to the Person Under Consideration?

You should either answer the questions fully and truthfully, and give any other essentially important facts as far as your personal knowledge goes, or else be silent altogether. The appeal to you by another employer, for a reference, is a purely private matter, and as the prospective employer is bound in honor to keep the information you furnish strictly private, so you are equally bound to be truthful with him, and to keep back no vital fact, since he places his interest wholly in your hands, trusting you implicitly. If you, by a too generous recommendation, impose upon him a worthless employee, you will very likely have reason to regret it afterward. I have suffered more than once from engaging domestic help on the strength of fulsome and even enthusiastic recommendations from mistresses who apparently made it a rule to give to every servant whom they dismissed for incompetency or other cause a certificate of the highest character, and who said nothing of faults which were certain to prove very objectionable. A single qualifying word would have been sufficient, in such cases, to avert the trouble that followed. You must bear in mind that business men who ask questions about persons they intend to employ ask the important questions they want answered. They better than many others know man's weakness

and do not expect to find perfection. Then by all means refrain from tearing down what might be the opportunity of a lifetime, remembering that wealth throws a protection around the business man, and he who works for him must stand or fall on the character his friends give him, before trial. If you do anything, go to the party you are recommending; if he has a fault, tell him of it, and warn him that it might cost him a position sometime. Unless the person under consideration had committed some grave wrong and was entirely unworthy of the position offered, your answering the questions asked would be sufficient. But if you believe he can and will perform the work required, even though he has not always done the right thing, it would be wrong indeed to say anything that would debar such a one from the expected position. The tendency of the world in general "to kick a man when he's down" is unchristian. When a man is trying to be somebody, lend a helping hand and treat him as a true Christian should—it matters not how low such a person had fallen previously. God help us to lift our fallen brothers!

342. Is There More than One Way of Salvation?

During his earthly ministry, Jesus set before his hearers the way of eternal life and also showed them the way that leads to perdition and the means of escape. There were many among the Pharisees and Sadducees who, having heard the message, still persisted in their unbelief. He warned them of the fate that awaited the impenitent wicked. He had come to save the world, and those who rejected him must bear the bur-

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den of their own rejection. The record of the Scriptures cannot be altered or done away with. God is a God of love and ever ready to forgive; but if we reject his Son and continue in sin after having received the Gospel invitation, we should blame ourselves alone for what may befall us. We bring our punishment upon our own heads and are self-condemned by our own act.

343. Can a Christian Find Anywhere in the Bible Justification for Self-defense Even Though His Life Is at Stake?

We presume you mean defense by force. If a man were accused of murder, or any capital offense, he could find justification for defending himself in court in the example of Paul, Peter, Stephen, etc., who defended themselves by speeches. Paul also availed himself of the provisions of the law of citizenship to save himself from injustice (see Acts 22:25). We believe that if Paul had been attacked by robbers when he was carrying to Jerusalem the money subscribed by the Christians for the relief of the poor, he would not have given up the money without a fight. But direct justification for taking up arms in self-defense, there seems to be none. Perhaps none was needed. It may have been regarded as the natural course, and as there is no direct prohibition of it, that course may be followed. We do not think that Christ's command that "ye resist not evil" (Matt. 5:39) applies to self-defense so much as to retaliation.

344. Why Were the Early Christians Urged to Anoint the Sick with Oil? (James 5:14).

There are those who explain James 5:14 by associating the anointing of the sick with the official anoint-

ing of priests, kings and perhaps prophets. In this way they have given a sacramental and symbolical character to what is really a simple custom of ordinary family life. Now oil is in familiar use in the East as an article of the toilet. It takes the place of our pomades and scents and its use is regarded as a sign of health. Just so the neglect of oil is the sign that a man is out of health. Those who are sick are not allowed to be anointed, nor are those who are passing through a time of mourning. When, therefore, James enjoins the elders to anoint the sick—that is, at once make his usual toilet—after prayer for his restoration, he really means that they are to pray for him with full faith and show the strong faith by acting toward him as if he were in fact recovered—that is, ready for his daily anointing. The elders were to give expression to their faith by their works, the particular works which would best show it in the case of the sick that they should at once proceed to wash, dress and anoint the sick man as if he were quite sure that God had heard their prayer and made him well.

345. Is There No Sinlessness Because God Is Not Able to Keep from Sin Those Who Trust in Him?

God is able to do many things that he will not do. He is able to keep men from sin, but it is not his habit to treat them as automaton. He could save the whole world by any act of his will, but he takes the slower, more noble course of drawing men to himself. He would have men choose him and seek him. As in the parable of the Prodigal Son, the father might have locked his son up and prevented him from going to the

far country; but he would not do so with his son. The son might go if he wished and when he wished to return he was welcomed back, but no compulsion was used. God deals so with men. He will not by an act of his power relieve his children of the necessity of watchfulness and resistance to temptation, making them as it were sin-proof. They must watch and pray, and he will help them to resist. The question of men leading a sinless life is one of fact, not of their ability to do so. God could keep us from committing sin, no one disputes; but as a matter of fact, he does not. The man does not live who does not commit sin. If he is a child of God he deplors it, repents of it, and strives to keep from it in the future, and beseeches God to keep him from falling. Sometimes he is brought to this condition by God's discipline: God interferes to prevent him continuing in sin and brings him back to himself by a road of sorrow and suffering. No child of God will say, "May I commit a sin a day or one sin an hour?" He will be anxious to avoid it and not to regard it as a privilege.

346. What Proof Have We Outside of the Bible that Man Has a Soul?

Man's conviction of immortality, even outside of the Bible, is world-old and world-wide. He is the only being who desires a hereafter or who has conceptions of another life. Wherever man is found, he has the inborn conviction of the existence of a Supreme Being and another world. He feels within him an influence that is not mortal or material. No other being on earth can rise above the mere allurements of sense; no other aspires to a future. Man feels that his state here is a

preparatory one; that it is a step to a higher education. The soul, in all its aspects, is its own prophet of immortality and has been so in all ages. From the days of the earliest philosophers, from Socrates and Cicero down to Baxter and Liddon, this fact has been stamped upon the history of the world, and despite materialists and skeptics, it is stronger and more universal than ever.

347. Is There Any Ground for the Opinion that God Makes Men Suffer in the Very Way in Which They Have Made Other Men Suffer?

There are those who hold with Adoni-bezek (Judg. 1:6) that "as I have done so God hath requited me," and there are undoubtedly retributive providences, but such cases are so rare as to be negligible. When such cases occur men's love of the sensational leads them to take note thereof and attach undue importance thereto. The great majority of God's judgments are not retaliatory. "It was an ethical maxim extensively accepted among ancient nations that men must suffer the same pains that they have inflicted on others. The later Greeks called this the Neoptolemic Tisis from the circumstance that Neoptolemus was punished in the same way in which he had sinned. He had murdered at the altar and at the altar he was murdered. Phalaris had roasted human beings in a brazen bull, and the same punishment was inflicted on himself." Dr. Farrar says of the punishment inflicted on Adoni-bezek: "This kind of punishment was not uncommon in ancient days. The cutting off of the thumbs would pre-

vent a man from ever again drawing a bow or wielding a sword. The cutting off of his great toes would deprive a man of that speed which was so essential for an ancient warrior." But though retributive punishments of this kind are not recognized in modern times it is peculiar how the old sentiment still prevails so that great satisfaction is felt in hearing of cases where Providence deals the blow to men which they have dealt to others.

348. Would a Converted Person, by Committing Suicide, Lose His Inheritance in Heaven?

Persons who are united to Christ by faith and have become heirs of God would not commit suicide, as no murderer (and a suicide is a self-murderer) has eternal life abiding in him (see I John 3:15). If such a person took his own life it is certain that his reason must have become unbalanced by grief, or trouble, or anxiety, and that he was irresponsible. Any person who, having his reason and his mental powers unimpaired, deliberately kills himself would give evidence by his act that he was not a true Christian, and therefore had never an inheritance in heaven. The condition of the suicide's mind prior to his committing the fatal act has to be taken into account. There is no doubt that a large proportion of persons who commit suicide are of unsound mind at the time. The brain is unbalanced, and the person is not responsible for his act. You may be quite sure that if a Christian loses control of his faculties, and in that condition kills himself, he will not by that act lose his interest in Christ. God will receive him, as he would if he died by accident or disease. In thinking of a suicide, we

must bear in mind the possibility of dementia, and not sorrow as those who have no hope.

349. Who Is the Holy Spirit, and What Is His Work?

The Holy Ghost is the Third Person in the Trinity and equal with the Father and Son in power and glory. He is the divine helper, assistant, counselor and instructor, and his office is to carry forward the great work of teaching and saving men which Christ began. He is to the disciples of Christ what Christ himself was to them while on earth (see John 15:26; I Cor. 12:4-11). He is the divine Spirit commissioned to guide, inspire and energize believers for doing the work of God on earth, interceding, directing, bearing witness and giving "gifts" (special spiritual qualifications). It is by the power of the Holy Ghost working through consecrated men and women that souls are won and the Gospel is made effective. It is apparently impossible fairly to interpret the Scripture references to the Holy Spirit and the experiences of Christian people in regard to him in any other way than by accepting this doctrine of the Trinity. Jesus said he would send the Holy Spirit. Peter declared on the day of Pentecost that he had come, and explained that Christ, after he had been exalted to the right hand of God, had sent him in fulfilment of the promise (Acts 2:16-33). His work is to convict of sin, to lead to repentance, to guide the believer, to reveal Christ, to be the Comforter in trouble, to strengthen and to sanctify the soul, to be the Guide, the Energizer, the Sanctifier of the Church.

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350. Does the Lord Send Evil Spirits?

The statement in I Sam. 16: 14 must be understood and so must many others in the Old Testament from the standpoint of the writer. The historians who wrote the books of Samuel and Kings were men of intense spirituality and deep piety. They looked at every event in its relation to God. Our modern histories reverse this method, and relate the circumstances which, in the opinion of the writers, suffice to explain events. Just as the ancient writers described thunder as the voice of God, and we explain it as the impact of the clouds. We should regard Saul as a man subject to periodical attacks of insanity; but the historian of the Old Testament regards him as under the displeasure of God, who sends an evil spirit to torment him.

351. Why, If God Is So Wise and Loving, Did He Make Man So Liable to Physical Suffering?

Do you not think that so delicate and wonderful an organism as the human body has less pain than might have been expected? Of course, there is no limit to God's power to do anything, but he has himself set limits to his mode of operations. He works through natural laws, and he seldom interferes between a violation of them and the penalty. Whatsoever a man sows that he reaps. A watchmaker produces a watch that he is sure will keep good time and will wear for years. But if a boy owns the watch and is fond of inspecting the works, altering the regulator and occasionally dropping it on the floor, the watchmaker's skill fails of its purpose. Even good men who

should know better are not sufficiently careful of the laws of health, and they have to suffer and they often transmit enfeebled constitutions to their children. There are, however, evidences of the foresight and goodness of God even in pain. One of them is that singular provision in excessive suffering which we call "fainting." It is like the safety valve of a steam engine, operated by the very power that brings danger. When pain becomes so extreme that nature cannot bear it, the man faints, that is, becomes unconscious of what he is suffering. That is a very merciful provision indicating the kindness and foresight of the Creator.

352. May Christians Consistently Pray for Wealth?

According to the old Hebrew formula, it was not sinful to ask for an increase of substance or for prosperity for flocks and crops. The Christian view of prayer, however, has modified this, and while there is no express prohibition against praying for riches, there is a direct promise that, having sought and obtained the divine blessing and pardon for sin, all things will be added. Probably the best answer to the question is furnished in the prophecy of Agur (Prov. 30:8) wherein he says: "Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; fill me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee and say who is the Lord, or lest I be poor and steal." Riches, as well as any other earthly good, are the gift of God, and deserve to be considered in this light. If one desires riches, that he may have more power to do good, there seems to be no just ground why he should not consider it proper to pray for them. We know

that riches are a source of great temptation, and that, as a matter of fact, they are frequently, if not almost constantly, misused, so that great grace is needed in order to their proper use. But the thoroughly consecrated soul will pray that he may be kept from perverting God's gifts. If we pray for riches to use them for our own pleasure alone, we do wrong. But many a man has prayed for riches, that he might have the means to benefit the world, and help toward the advancement of Christ's kingdom. If these things are kept in view, we see no reason why one should not pray for riches. We have many evidences that God is pleased with such petitions, when they are offered in the right manner. Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying: "Oh, that thou would bless me indeed and enlarge my coast." This was a prayer for increase of worldly possessions, and we are informed that God granted the request. From this we may infer that God was pleased with his petition. But when prayer is offered for riches, three things should be borne in mind: First, that we must work as well as pray. If a man prays for riches, and then folds his hands waiting for God to add to his possessions, he does wrong. Second, when he has not properly used what he has already in his possession, it is wrong to ask for more. Third, temporal things are never good unless they are to be used for good ends, for the glory of God and the advancement of his kingdom. Riches are to be sought, and it is not improper to pray for them. But it should be remembered, when asking for them, that they are the smallest of the Christian treasures.

353. Is the World Getting Better or Worse?

“The question of whether the world is getting better or worse is a much mooted one. It is discussed from many angles, and upon it many of our best thinkers differ. The answer must rest upon what kind of improvement is in the mind of the student of the question. Scientifically, we know the world is moving forward by gigantic strides. When we think of the huge drink bill, the white slave traffic, the oppression of the helpless poor, etc., in the light of present enlightenment, perhaps in the minds of the majority, there is a question as to whether the world is better or worse morally. It seems to me, however, that the basis upon which God decides that question is that of relationship to him. The question which determines eternity with the soul is what we do with Jesus Christ. If the world is being drawn into closer fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God, we must believe it is growing better. If not, the opposite must be true. From this viewpoint, the question cannot be settled by world conditions, but by the spiritual condition of the visible church of God. If the professing believers in Christ are more spiritual, shining brighter, a greater power in the world and leading souls to Christ at a greater ratio than the physical birth rate, then, and only then, can we believe the world is growing better, as God sees it.” Our correspondent is right as to the real character of the test of world betterment. It must be a spiritual one, not regulated by our advancement in knowledge, art and science, nor by the multitude of our inventions, but by our loving obedience to God's laws, our closer union with him through his Son, and by our application of the teachings of Jesus in our daily

lives. The Gospel standard of Christian efficiency is not one of wealth or intellectuality, but of rightness with God and love for our fellow man.

354. What Is the Comparative Value of Human and Divine Wisdom?

The first three chapters of I Corinthians contain the argument that all human wisdom and power are valueless and insignificant as compared to the power and wisdom of God. The passage (I Cor. 3: 22, 23) marks the climax of this argument, and is one of Paul's exalted flights of thought and language. He is exhorting the Christian to a right sort of pride in his splendid possessions. The possessions and powers of other men are not worth being proud of. But everything in the universe belongs in a sense to the Christian because it belongs to Christ. This does not of course mean that any man would have a right to claim the possessions of another in the name of Christ. But the Christian's riches are in Christ. Christ is the Creator and Ruler of everything, and since the Christian is the heir of Christ he has a share in all the power and wisdom and richness of God. This chapter also contains Paul's urging against divisions: followers of the various teachers formed different groups in the Corinthian Church. The apostle wanted to get their minds up above all these human matters to the infinite source of all wisdom. It is a plea for Christian unity as well as for a spiritual and heavenly, a bold and buoyant frame of mind.

355. Can We Justify a Devotion to Religious Work So Close that It Is Maintained at the Sacrifice of Health?

While religious principle is of more value than health or even life itself, God does not ordinarily require a devotion so close that bodily illness will follow. A devotion which would deliberately sacrifice health would belong to the same category as the penances, flagellations and mutilations, self-inflicted by followers of other religions than the Christian. To violate the natural laws set up by God is a sin, yet even such a violation may be justifiable in cases of great emergency.

356. What Do the Jews of To-day Believe in Regard to Jesus?

Many educated Jews believe thoroughly that Jesus of Nazareth lived and that he was the teacher of a high, pure and true philosophy. They reject those passages of the New Testament which claim divinity for Jesus and which narrate miracles, though many of them still accept as historic the miracles of the Old Testament.

357. If God Has Power to Do All Things, Why Doesn't He Banish Starving, or Send Food from the Sky, as He Did Long Ago? If God Loves Us and Has Power to Do All These Wonderful Things, Why Does He Let Sin Go On?

Taking the second part of the question first, we must remember that the whole spiritual world is based

on the freedom of each individual to choose between right and wrong. There would be no such thing as character if every act and choice were forced. A choice that is forced has no moral value or quality whatever. So because God wants to develop a race of beings who are really good, he leaves us free to choose right or wrong. It is terrible to imagine that God is the author of sin. He is the author of freedom, and many of the creatures to whom he has given this priceless gift and opportunity of freedom use it in making shameful choices and doing shameful deeds. We get a little light upon the first part of the question by this consideration of the second part. The whole universe seems to be in the midst of titanic agonies, struggling toward perfection. Paul declares: "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain." The mystery of pain no one can solve, except that we know that just as freedom produces character, so pain produces moral, mental and spiritual strength and purity. Man seems to be the highest point in nature, and everything in nature is subordinate to the main business of producing that race of beings who are to be really good. Starvation is simply a part of the vast woe of the universe. But to conquer starvation is not God's duty but man's. It is man's fault that some people starve. There is enough food for all, but man has devised laws and instituted customs which deprive part of the human race of the means of subsistence and give others more than they need. And it is man's duty to find a way whereby the world's bounty can be so distributed that all shall have the means of life.

358. What Is Said by Worldly Authority About the Bible as a Real Help to Good Citizenship?

Daniel Webster says: "If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but, if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity. The Bible is the book of all others for lawyers as well as divines, and I pity the man who cannot find in it a rich supply of thought and rule of conduct. I believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. The miracles which he wrought establish in my mind his personal authority and render it proper for me to believe what he asserts."

359. Is It Right to Hold Sunday School in a Hall Used at Other Times for Dancing?

It would be far better not to have the Sunday school meet in such a hall. If it were a hall to which the community looked as a center of social and civic life, and dances were only occasionally had there, the situation would not be so bad. The thought of the children about the building would be of its lectures, concerts, debates, forums, conferences, or possibly its athletic contests, or reading rooms; the dancing being only incidental would not be largely in their minds, but would be thought of in a matter-of-fact way as something which some of their elders sanctioned and others disapproved. Again, the fact that other interests centered in the hall would tend to keep even the dancing parties within the limits of decorum. But a hall

used exclusively for dancing must possess an atmosphere of sensuality and irreligion that makes it entirely unsuitable as the meeting-place of a Sunday school. If the public school is available for the Sunday school sessions they ought by all means to move back to it.

360. Can There Be Any Morality Without a Knowledge of and Recognition of a Supreme Being?

Races that have not received the Gospel are judged according to the light they have. Missionaries tell us of heathen peoples who have a certain standard of morals and conduct, notwithstanding their ignorance of the Gospel, and all races, however unevangelized, have some knowledge or intuition of a Supreme Being whom they must obey. The Bible tells us that those not having either the law or the Gospel may be "a law unto themselves" (Rom. 2:14). We have no warrant for assuming that the heathen who died in ignorance of Christ are beyond the reach of God's mercy. In every age he has had his witnesses—good men and women who have lived clean, upright lives, even under natural law. We are not justified in holding that they are not acceptable (Acts 10:35; Rom. 4:9). You will find in Rom. 2:12-14 the passage which explains that those who have neither the law nor the Gospel "may be a law unto themselves." This obviously means that men and women who have never heard of Christ are not beyond the reach of the divine mercy, if they have lived good lives even under natural law, and have been a blessing to those around them. John

Wesley wrote toward the close of his ministerial career: "He that feareth God and worketh righteousness according to the lights he has is acceptable to God." In Rom. 4:9 it is clearly stated that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. The Judge of all will not judge unjustly. For those who know the Gospel, there is the immediate responsibility to accept it, and live it in their lives.

361. With So Many Denominations Extant, Who Can Say Which One Is Right?

It has been very aptly said that, while no one church or denomination has a monopoly of the truth, all have more or less of the truth. We have never believed in the attitude which denounces others simply because they do not agree with us in matters of detail. When they hold the great essentials of the Christian faith, they are Christian, irrespective of differences in creeds or ceremonies. There are doubtless many who find themselves in doubt with respect to certain Scriptural interpretations; but even this difference may not be vital. Further, many find that they receive more spiritual benefit in one church than in any other, and if that church holds the essentials, then it is the best church for such people. We sometimes hear doubts expressed as to the orthodoxy of the teachings of certain pastors; but this, after all, is a matter which soon settles itself. If any man's work is of God, it will be acknowledged by him and will stand; if otherwise, nothing under heaven can make it permanent. It may flourish for a little time, but will ultimately pass away and be forgotten.

362. What Should Be the Attitude of Christians on the Question of War?

Under the old dispensation, war was regarded as having the divine sanction when it was waged in a righteous cause. Under the Gospel, however, we are taught to love our enemies and to be on terms of friendship with all men. Yet, even in the teachings of Jesus, we are told that wars will continue to the end of the age (see Matt. 24:6; Mark 13:7). The Apocalypse is full of it. The enlightened portion of the race regards it as an evil, yet as one which is inevitable as the outcome of human conditions. Under these circumstances, it is the duty of the Christian to fight war with all his power and influence; but, being compelled to recognize its actual existence, must distinguished between wars that have justification from a human standpoint and those that have no justification. All war is bad, but some wars are far worse than others. The ideal condition for which we should work and strive is described in Isa. 2:4.

363. Does God Permit Evil that Good May Result?

That he permits evil, or removes the restraint of the Spirit from evildoers who are flagrant and persistent, is shown by many instances in Scripture and even in modern history. If we accept as true the Scripture statement that God "maketh the wrath of man to praise him," we see no reason to doubt that he many times overrules the evil acts of men for ultimate good.

364. Has the Bible Found Favor Among Non-Christians?

This is best answered by quotations from such men as Goethe, the great German poet and writer, who wrote as follows: "It is a belief in the Bible which has served me as the guide of my moral and literary life. No criticism will be able to perplex the confidence which we have entertained of a writing whose contents have stirred up and given life to our vital energy by its own. The farther the ages advance in civilization the more will the Bible be used."

365. Can There Be Healing Without Medicine?

We have stated on a number of occasions that we believe the prayerful use of medicine to be right and Scriptural. Isaiah put a fig poultice on King Hezekiah's boils. The bacteriological theory of disease has made the use of medicine all the more reasonable. We have found that many diseases are simply attacks made upon the bodily tissues by living organisms, quite like minute animals. It is no more wrong to attack these diminutive animals with poison than it would be to attack, with club or gun, a mad dog who would threaten one's wife or child. Medicines produce a chemical reaction in the body which has curative or nutritive value; indeed, many medicines are foods, and to take them is just like regulating one's diet to meet physical conditions. Many skilful physicians are firm believers in prayer, and pray for the success of their treatment. God gives wisdom and skill to combat disease, and after we have availed ourselves of all these means we should ask his blessing upon them. When, however, we speak of persons divinely

healed being sufferers from functional and not organic disease, we do not restrict divine power. We have no doubt of God's being able to heal organic disease. We believe, however, that some of the cures attributed to divine healing are really effected by other means. We can understand that if a man has all the organs of his body in a healthy condition, but some of them not performing their functions, he may be cured by a mental process. If he believes thoroughly and sincerely that God will cure him in answer to prayer, his faith will save him. It may give him an impulse which will start the sluggish organs into activity. A sudden fright will sometimes do the same thing. This is not divine healing, but it is faith healing, and it explains the cure of many of the people who think that God has healed them. There are other cases, however, which cannot be explained in that way.

366. Was There Any Other Way Possible for Remission of Sin Except by the Shedding of Blood?

The thought of a sacrifice for sin underlies the whole message of the Bible. The fact that some promises do not specifically refer to this does not violate in any way the broad, general principle. The Bible as a whole states the method by which God undertakes to save people from sin. The Old Testament, in law and ceremony and prophecy, looks forward to a great sacrifice that is to be made, of which the sacrifice of animals is but a type. The Epistles of the New Testament explain how the sacrifice of Christ may be applied by faith to the human soul. The Gospels tell the story of the life of the Saviour and give with great detail

and fulness the account of his sacrificial death. He himself said distinctly of his death (Matt. 26:28): "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Read with special care the 9th and 10th chapters of Hebrews, the 5th and 6th chapters of Romans, I John 1:7 and the many other passages which state clearly that salvation from sin is wrought by the sacrifice of Christ. The fact of the atonement underlies all the promises of Scripture. It seems idle, as well as dangerous, to speculate whether there may be or might have been some other way of salvation. This way fits in with our knowledge of nature and of life, and has been testified to by multitudes of redeemed souls. We *know* that through the blood of Christ salvation from sin can be found; we certainly do not know that it can be found in any other way.

367. Does Not the 58th Chapter of Isaiah Teach the Duty, Not Since Abrogated, of Observing the Seventh Day as the Sabbath?

To our mind the chapter seems to teach exactly opposite. It was a reproof to the formalists who were more careful about the letter than the spirit. The fasts and observances on which they prided themselves were an offense to God while they were not fulfilling the law in the spirit. It was righteousness and deeds of kindness and mercy that God required of his people, not the minute literal observances which were easy to render. The command to observe the seventh day has not been repealed so far as we know, nor has the command to observe the Passover, nor the law of circum-

cision. We keep the spirit of the command in consecrating a seventh portion of our time and at the same time we celebrate the resurrection of Christ which to us is a much more important reason for holding a day sacred than the reason given in Ex. 20 for observing the seventh day. The very question of longitude precludes the possibility of uniform observance. If you travel westward around the world and observe the natural days, you would find yourself at the end of the first voyage observing Saturday as Sunday and at the end of the second voyage observing Friday, and so on unless you dropped a day in each instance to bring yourself in line with the rest of the world. The people who think they are pleasing God by going back to the seventh day observance make the mistake of conceiving of him as having a mind as small as the human mind, which is far too apt to attach importance to trivialities.

368. Can a Person Unknowingly Be a Hypocrite?

There is in the essential meaning of the word "hypocrite" the idea of deceit, of making an effort to mislead others about one's character. This can only be done consciously. So in this sense there can be no such thing as an unconscious hypocrite. But there is a practical danger, namely the danger of unconscious inconsistencies between one's character and one's profession. The true Christian should always strive eagerly to make his conduct tally with his profession. He must make no compromises with his conscience. He must not only insist upon conquering, by divine grace, the inconsistencies he is aware of, but he must

try to discover these "unconscious inconsistencies," these things in his life which appear wrong to others or may have a hurtful influence, and gain their eradication also.

369. What Chance Is There for True Church Union?

In the study of the religious conditions of the present time it is very disappointing to find so much lack of sympathy for each other's views among Christian people of the different sects. It is not as acute as in former years, but too much of it exists for the upbuilding of the Christian life in the community. However, to lament because all bodies of Christians are not of one mind in all things, and do not all have one form of worship and one denomination, is illogical under present conditions. The church is steadily drawing closer together. There is a growing disposition to meet on common ground and make common cause in many branches of Christian work; yet it may be a long time before denominational distinctions are surrendered and all are merged in one flock with one Shepherd, as we have the divine assurance will ultimately be the case. There have been distinctions ever since apostolic times (see I Cor. 1:12; also I Cor. 12); still the church has grown amazingly; the little group of 120 mentioned in Acts 1:15 has become a vast army of 564,000,000. In this mighty host there are many battalions, each with its own distinctive insignia and history, many of them of glorious memory. Yet all serve under one Commander, the great Captain of Salvation, and all march under the banner of the Cross. Jealousy there has been, and there has been also much

of that emulation in well-doing which was the characteristic of the early churches; but the march of the army as a whole has been steadily onward, always keeping in view the ultimate goal. This is a time when the church needs to be helped rather than criticized. It may be that it needs new trials and sufferings to prepare it for the new Pentecost for which the whole Christian world is earnestly praying and watching.

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370. Can There Be Forgiveness Without Confession?

If the wrong was done to some particular person or persons, God's forgiveness cannot be claimed until the wrong has been confessed to the person or persons concerned, if they can be found, and until it has been, so far as possible, made right. Many sins are between the soul and God alone, and these sins it is not necessary to confess to any one but God. Many Christians lose their peace by taking the attitude of unwillingness to confess, when they are probably under no obligation to confess. What robs them of their peace is not their failure to confess, but their refusal to say to God that they will do anything he wants them to do. Do not be afraid of God. He will not hurt you; he will not ask you to do anything grotesque or unreasonable. Tell him you will confess as and when he wishes. Then search the past, with the Holy Spirit's help, and see if there are any people to whom you should confess personal wrongs or with whom you should make certain matters straight. God will give you grace and courage to make the confession and restitution frankly and fully. But remember we are saved not by confession nor restitution, nor even repentance, *but by faith in Christ.*

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371. Are All the Christian Virtues or Characteristics Fruits and Gifts of the Holy Spirit?

James writes (James 1:17): "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above." That is, among others, all the Christian graces or characteristics are direct gifts of the Holy Spirit, and then they are the fruits or results of these gifts. The Holy Spirit implants them and then develops them to stronger and higher degrees. It has been the experience of multitudes that after trying in vain to secure such soul qualities as love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, patience, they have received these gifts directly through the blessing of the Holy Spirit. It is also true, however, that many people who are not professed Christians, indeed, some in pagan lands, have seemed to attain many of the graces of Christianity, such as meekness, gentleness, humility, kindness, self-control. It is impossible to explain all the subtle workings of the Holy Spirit, who, as Jesus said, is like the wind, of which we hear the sound, but cannot tell whence it comes nor where it goes. But knowing the Gospel and its results, it is our duty to persuade others to attain heavenly character by receiving the Holy Spirit, and, for ourselves, to give the Spirit right of way in our souls as he strives to make us more and more like Christ.

372. Where Was Jesus "Delivered Unto the Gentiles to Be Mocked and Spitefully Treated?"

The passage in Luke 18:32, 33 was absolutely fulfilled. The Jews arraigned Jesus before Pilate, the

Roman governor, and he was delivered over to the Roman soldiers and taken by them to Calvary. It was Roman soldiers who carried out Pilate's sentence by crucifying Christ, Roman soldiers who parted his garments among them, who kept guard by the cross and who pierced his side, and they did not leave until their duty was fully accomplished (see Matt. 27:27 and 54; Luke 23:47 and rest of the chapter; John 19:23, 32, 33, 34).

**373. If "Every One that Asketh Receiveth,"
According to Matt. 7:8, How Does God
Act When Two or More Christians Ask
for the Same Object?**

There are cases in which it would be clearly impossible for each of two Christians to get the same object, for which both might pray. A certain position might be vacant, and two Christian men might each pray to secure it; or a prize might be offered and each of two Christian students might pray to receive it. Or, as indeed has not infrequently happened, two good men might each love the same woman and each pray for success in winning her. In any such case God cannot answer the prayer of one without depriving the other of the gift. These are all amplifications of the same general principle which the Lord illustrated in the case of Paul and his "thorn in the flesh" (II Cor. 12:7). Paul's prayer was answered, but not in the way he wished for. He asked for relief from the thorn; he received instead the promise of superabounding grace. So in every case in which God must refuse the literal answer to a prayer, he will, if the soul is submissive

and trustful, make up for the disappointment by bestowing direct and personal blessing, and not infrequently even a better material gift than the one requested. Again, in the case of two Christians praying for the same object, it is probable that only one could have prevailing faith. All the Scripture teaching about prayer must be massed together in studying any phase of it. We are to ask "according to his will" and "in faith." God would not give to two of his children the assurance that each was to receive a certain single object, nor would both of them reach the plane of prevailing faith. This was the message of the paragraph quoted. It was a warning against selfish praying. When we pray for an object we should stop to ask ourselves whether or not our receiving the gift means that it must be taken away from some one else.

374. In What Sense Did Paul Fear that He Might Become a Castaway?

In the well-known passage in I Cor. 9:27 Paul implies that if he, with all his labors for others, still needs to apply self-denying watchfulness and strenuous effort, and might still fall short of the special reward for which he strove, how much more should the Corinthians, who were going recklessly to the extreme of Christian liberty, apply the lesson to their own lives? It is to be noted that the Revised Version, instead of using the word "castaway," adopts the preferable translation "rejected," *i. e.*, a loser in the special contest for the reward of those who "turn many to righteousness."

**375. Has the Prophecy in Ezek. 4:3 of a City
Besieged from a Wall of Iron Ever
Been Fulfilled?**

It was not a prophecy at all, but a picture sermon. The situation was this: A number of Jewish exiles in Babylon were naturally concerned about what was happening at home in Jerusalem. There were no newspapers, and they went to Ezekiel's house to learn what he thought. He was a man of eminence and piety. Some of the exiles did not believe that Jehovah would allow the city and temple to be hurt; others thought that nothing could resist the Assyrian armies. Ezekiel believed that the city would be destroyed. To impress the conviction upon them, he made a clay model of the city and set up an iron wall before it. Perhaps he talked to them, too, but the symbol would tell the story whether he did so or not. As you know, Jerusalem was taken and the temple burned.

**376. What Is the Meaning of the Statement
(Heb. 2:10) that Christ Was Made Per-
fect by His Sufferings?**

There can be no doubt of Christ being perfect. His life in the flesh proved that. But in order that he might be specially prepared for the work he is now doing, as the Head of his Church, the High Priest of his people, he had to undergo temptation and suffering, that he might be able to help the tempted and comfort the sufferer. What they bear, what their struggles are, he could learn only from experience. That he did learn, that he bore all so nobly, was a proof of his being perfect. The man who has encountered temptation and has triumphed belongs to a

higher order than the innocent man who has never been tested. His holiness has been proved by his trial. The physician who knows how to treat yellow fever is better able to deal with the disease after he has passed through an epidemic of it than he was before he put his theories to a practical test.

377. What Is the Meaning of the Offense of the Cross?

By the "offense of the cross" (Gal. 5:11) Paul means the contempt and antagonism felt by both Jews and Greeks toward the idea of being saved by the death of Jesus. The Jews thought they would be saved by keeping the law; the Greeks hoped to be saved by seeking wisdom. But Paul insisted that we are saved, not by keeping the law nor by being wise, but by believing that Jesus Christ died for us (see I Cor. 1:18-24). It is hard for us in these days to understand precisely the controversy Paul was having with the Jews and the way they felt toward him. They looked upon him as a bad man. That was the reproach that he had to bear. They felt that to be "good" one had to be circumcised and to keep the ceremonial law of Moses. Paul said that was not the way to be good. He said it was not necessary to be circumcised or to keep the ceremonial law. The Galatians to whom he writes in the passage mentioned had accepted this teaching of his, but had been influenced to return, to some extent at least, to the bondage of the Jewish law. Paul sternly rebukes them for this. They have been refusing to bear the "offense" of the cross; they were refusing to state and live the testimony that they were saved not by any effort of their

own but by the fact that Christ died for them. The "offense" of the cross also means the self-sacrifice, the humility, the brave service for others which are included in the self-abandonment which the soul must make at the cross of Jesus.

378. What Is the "Faith Verse"?

What is known as the "faith verse" (Heb. 11:1) is a description of faith in its widest sense, not restricted to faith in the Gospel alone. "The substance of things hoped for" is interpreted to mean that faith gives substance to God's promises by enabling us to take hold of them with absolute confidence, and making them present realities to us, although yet unfulfilled. By the assent of faith, we already enter into the enjoyment, in a spiritual sense, of those things that are promised; or, as one expositor has expressed it, "through faith, the future object of Christian hope in its beginning is already substantiated." By faith we are sure of eternal things that they *are*, and by hope we are confident that we shall *have* them. The clause, "the evidence of things not seen," refers to the soul vision that enables us to see what the eye itself cannot perceive." Calvin wrote on this subject: "What should we do if we had not faith and hope to lean on, and if our minds did not emerge amidst the darkness, above the world, by the shining of the Word and Spirit of God?"

379. What Was the "Host of Heaven" Which the Children of Israel Worshiped?

In Acts 7:41, 42 Stephen was describing the idolatries of the Israelites which had driven them into

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the wilderness as a punishment, where they were abandoned to the worship of the "heavenly bodies"—the stars. During their long stay in Egypt they had become accustomed to the idols of that land and the golden calf was one of these. Possibly Apis, or Mnevis, was the Egyptian model of the calf they set up in the desert. They had also learned the worship of Moloch and Remphan, heathen deities representing the divine powers ascribed to nature.

380. To Whom Does Paul Refer by the Title, James, the Lord's Brother?

There has been a bitter dispute as to this passage in Gal. 1:19 and as to the identity of this James and indeed as to whether Christ had a brother at all. Scholars, however, outside the Roman Catholic Church, are now generally of the opinion that this James was a son of Joseph and Mary; that he did not believe in Christ until after the resurrection; that he was a man greatly respected by the Jews on account of his blameless life, until he became a Christian; that he became the bishop of Jerusalem, and was president of the council mentioned in Acts 15:13 and was the author of the Epistle of James.

381. What Is the Meaning of the Term "The Testimony of Jesus"?

The term "the testimony of Jesus" (in Rev. 19:10) means, as it is used frequently in the Revelation, the testimony of the Christian *to* Jesus or *about* Jesus. It is his "witness" for Jesus, his statement as to who and what Jesus is and what he has done for his own soul. All Christians should certainly have this testi-

mony. They should be able to state, humbly, firmly, simply, frankly, what Christ has done for them and what he means to them. In the New Testament it means chiefly this speaking for Jesus or giving Christian exhortation or instruction under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

382. What Is Meant When Isaiah Said that God Would Shave with a Razor that Is Hired (Isa. 7:20)?

The passage is its own explanation. It is that God would use Assyria to chastise and punish his people. The loss of the beard among the Jews was considered an indignity and a disgrace. Evil was to come upon them, and Assyria would be the instrument in God's hand of inflicting it. The Assyrians were not his servants, and did not know that in attacking Israel they were doing God's will. They were hired, in the sense that they received compensation in plunder, not as God's children obeying him, but as strangers who were hired and paid for performing a special task.

383. What Is Meant by Noah Being "Perfect in His Generation"?

The passage in Gen. 6:9 means that Noah, as living by faith, was just and perfect, *i. e.*, sincere in his desire to do God's will (Gal. 3:2; Heb. 11:7). In a world teeming with wickedness, and amid universal depravity, he had stood alone, exercising faith in the testimony of God and condemning the sins of men to which his own virtuous life offered a remarkable contrast.

384. How Is the Statement (Jer. 7: 22) that God Did Not Command Sacrifice to Be Reconciled with the Elaborate Legislation of Leviticus?

The apparent discrepancy is due to the Hebrew idiom in which the negative has the effect that the comparative has with us. To render the passage in Jeremiah freely, we might say: It was not of sacrifice and burnt offering that God spoke when he brought the people out of Egypt, but of something much more important, namely, righteousness and obedience. By some it has been doubted whether God ever did command sacrifice, or only regulated a practise in existence from the earliest times. The peculiar phraseology of the first verses of Leviticus gives color to that theory. "If any man of you bring an offering," is a different way of introducing legislation to that of the Decalogue.

385. What Is the Meaning of "We Know that to Them that Love God All Things Work Together for Good, Even to Them Who Are Called"?

The passage in Rom. 8:28 in the original is more striking: "We know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them who are called," etc. This is an assurance that, whatever may come to us, he will cover us with his loving providence and will not suffer his beneficent purpose in our behalf to be turned aside, if we fully trust him.

386. Is It Possible to Live as Perfect a Life as Adam Did Before He Fell?

We know so little about Adam's life that it is difficult to answer the question categorically. The circumstances of our lives are so different from those described as existing in the garden of Eden, that they do not admit of comparison. Our inherited proclivities would make it more difficult for us than for Adam to live a perfect life. Theoretically it is, of course, possible to live without sinning, but as a matter of experience we know that no one attains that ideal. Some come nearer to it than others, being of a more spiritual nature, or by being kept more rigidly from temptation, or in having the help of the Holy Spirit in larger degree than others. Absolute sinlessness is the Bible ideal to which we are repeatedly exhorted to aim.

387. What Is Meant by the Prophecy, "The Sceptre Shall Not Depart from Judah nor a Lawgiver from Between His Feet"?

The passage in Gen. 49:10 is one which has ever been regarded by Christians and by the Jews themselves as indicating the Messiah. In ancient Egyptian monuments of important personages the position of the secretary or scribe who records the prince's or ruler's decrees or laws is a kneeling one, almost literally "between his feet." The Targum renders the passage thus: "One having the principality shall not be taken from the house of Judah, nor a scribe from his children's children, until the Messiah come whose the kingdom is." Still another version from the same

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source is: "Kings shall not fail from the house of Judah, nor skilful doctors of the law from his children's children, until the time when the King's Messiah shall come." The allusion to Judah is interpreted to refer to the primacy of that tribe in war, which was to continue until the promised land was conquered and the ark of the covenant deposited at Shiloh. Some of the ablest expositors point out that the descent of our Lord from Judah is not conveyed in the words "from between his feet," hence the question of lineage is not involved.

388. Who Is the "King of the South" Referred to in Dan. 11?

The "king of the south" (literally, "king of mid-day") was Ptolemy Soter (of Egypt), the son of Lagus, who took the title of king, although his father was merely a governor. In Dan. 12:1 "at that time" is interpreted as referring to the time of Antichrist, and the great persecutions that were to precede the final deliverance. Like many other prophecies, however, this one has the double vision, the first having reference to the time of Antiochus, the persecutor of the Jews, and the second or further interpretation relating to the last persecutions which are to precede the final deliverance of Israel.

389. What Is the Meaning of Paul's Statement that Nothing Is Unclean of Itself?

Paul was sweeping away all the dietary and ceremonial laws of the Jewish code. They were so much rubbish from his standpoint. At the same time, he did not wish to hurt any one's prejudices. If a man

had honestly and sincerely come to the conclusion that a certain practise was sinful, and yet indulged in it, he would be committing sin, because he would be doing what he believed to be wrong. The practise might not be really sinful, but it would be sinful for him, because it was a violation of his conscience. The Talmud gives a case in point. If a Jew in traveling lost count of the days of the week and was found working on the Sabbath, he was blameless; but if knowing it was the Sabbath he was working, he would deserve to be stoned.

390. What Is the Meaning of "If Any Man's Work Shall Be Burned, He Shall Suffer Loss: But He Himself Shall Be Saved: Yet so as by Fire"?

There has been much discussion concerning the passage in I Cor. 3:15. Dean Alford gives the sense as "if any teacher's work consist of such materials as the fire will destroy," loss will be suffered, and he adds that the meaning is as though the structure reared by a builder (not the foundation) is consumed by the fire, yet he escapes, but with the loss of his work; or as Bengel puts it, as a shipwrecked merchant, though he loses his merchandise, is saved though having to pass through the waves. It is really a crucial test of the value of the man's work; all those parts that will not stand the ordeal of burning investigation will perish, although the man himself may be saved, salvation being a free gift and not a reward. These perishable portions may be interpreted as doctrines that are valueless in themselves and which have been superadded to the essentials. They are frail handiwork and cannot stand

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the fierce heat of the furnace of trial. Thus it follows that there are some who, stripped at the last of all their assumption of personal merit, will stand naked before God and yet receive the precious gift of his clemency.

391. Who Was the Poet to Whose Writings Paul Referred in His Speech at Athens?

The poet to whom Paul referred in his speech at Athens (Acts 17:28) when he made the quotation, "For we are also his offspring," is believed by some commentators to have been Aratus, who had the same sentiment expressed almost identically in an astronomical poem entitled *Phenomena*. Others claim to have discovered the source of the quotation in different writers, among them Cleanthes and Pindar. The real source is uncertain, and it is quite probable that Paul spoke from general recollection, rather than in the precise language of any particular author.

392. What Is Meant by Some One Leaving "the First Love"?

These words were addressed to the Christian believers at Ephesus. The "first love" does not refer to any person or influence other than Christ, but simply means that the Ephesians had lost the intensity of their affection and zeal for Christ. The Ephesian Church had had special opportunities and blessing. Under Paul's ministrations its members had received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-6); the apostle had resided with them for three years (Acts 20:31); he had later written to them what is perhaps his most spiritually exalted epistle. Their experience of love for Christ had been warm and

keen. In his message sent them through John the Master is reproving them for having allowed their love for him to grow weak and cold.

393. What Is Meant by Paul When He Speaks of Jesus "Being Made Better than the Angels"?

The passage in Heb. 1:4 means that the Son, through his exaltation to the majesty of God, had attained to complete dominion over the world, and was thus, in both power and dignity, greater than the angels. In the second chapter Paul is dealing with the significance of the redemptive message, and all the circumstances connected with it. The Hebrews to whom he was appealing doubted whether Jesus, who was crucified, was really their Messiah, and he addresses himself to dispelling this doubt. In Heb. 2:9, he shows that Jesus, for a short time in his humanity, was subordinated to the angels ("in all things as we are") (see verse 7); but with the completion of his sufferings and death, he is again crowned with exaltation in honor and glory. It was only by his voluntary humiliation that he could become the Mediator of salvation.

394. What Is the Meaning of the Greeting, "Peace Be with This House"?

The greeting in Luke 10:5 was the ancient form of salutation in the East and prevails unto this day. "But from the lips of Christ and his messengers," writes a commentator, "it meant something far higher, both in the gift and the giving of it, than the current greeting." It meant the spiritual peace which is the

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gift of God through Jesus Christ. There are many homes in our own land to-day in which such a salutation from the lips of Christian friends would not be regarded as out of place but would be welcomed.

395. What Is Meant by the Jews Having a “Veil Over Their Hearts”?

The passage in II Cor. 3:14 means that the Jews have a veil upon their hearts, because they have allowed their allegiance to the old dispensation to keep them from believing Christ. It is he who brings light. The Jews let the old ceremonial law remain as a veil between themselves and the light of God which is in Christ.

396. What Is the Meaning of “Whosoever Shall Keep the Whole Law and Yet Of- fend in One Point He Is Guilty of All”?

This passage in James 2:10 is on the principle (maintained by the Jewish rabbis) that the law is one seamless garment and if you rend a part you destroy the integrity and perfection of the whole. It is as though one discord spoiled an entire harmony, one broken link ruined the chain. The law is a whole, and by breaking any part you break its *wholeness*, though you may not have broken the whole law. God requires perfect, not partial, obedience, and we are not to choose parts of the law to keep and parts that we may break.

397. What Is Meant by Being “Caught Up to the Third Heaven”?

The passage “caught up to the third heaven” in II Cor. 12:2 has been variously interpreted. Some

say that the birds live in the first heaven, the clouds are in the second, and the third is the home of the soul. Others claim that childhood is the first heaven, the church the second, and the third is the home of the soul. According to the ancient writers, there were several degrees of spiritual elevation, these being revealed in visions. The "first heaven" (the first of these degrees) was that of the clouds and the air, the "second" that of the stars and sky, and the "third" was above both of these, where God's glory continually shines (see Eph. 4:10). Paul was familiar with the learning of his age, and was a "master" in literary expression. He sat as a pupil "at the feet of Gamaliel," who was celebrated in the Talmudist writings as one of the seven teachers to whom the title "rabbin" was given. In II Cor. 12 (which contains the passage in question) Paul speaks of his vision when he was "caught up to the third heaven." In the Jewish teaching of the time, the first heaven was that of the clouds or the air; the second that of the stars and the sky, and the third the spiritual heaven, the seat of divine glory. The word "heavens" is used in the Bible in varying senses, which must be gathered from the context, the most familiar being the visible heavens, as distinguished from the earth and as a part of the whole creation (see Gen. 1:1). Paul's "third heaven" was thus higher than the aerial or stellar world, and cognizable not by the eye, but by the mind alone. The word "world" is generally used in Scripture in the purely material sense to refer to the habitable earth and its people. The passages in Heb. 4:3; 9:26; 9:5; 11:7; 11:38, etc., have this material significance. In John 14:2, however, many interpre-

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ters recognize an implied recognition of other worlds, the whole universe being a "house of many mansions."

398. What Does John Mean by the Statement that the World Could Not Contain the Books Necessary to Report All Jesus Said and Did?

The words in John 21:25 were probably written when the writer was overwhelmed at the thought of how much there had been in those three wonderful years that had never been written, and never could be written. He may, too, have had the idea that there were some things which the world could not appreciate or understand if they were written. The word "contain" may have been used in that sense.

399. What Is Meant by the Statement in I Cor. 7:13-15, About Wives Being Sanctified by Husbands?

This was Paul's answer to certain Corinthian Christians, who wanted to know whether they should continue living with pagan partners. If the pagan wife or husband refused to live with the Christian husband or wife, Paul said they were not to be hindered but allowed to go. But where the pagan was willing to stay, the Christian was not to move against them. The Corinthian Church seemed to fear that the Christian might be drawn back into heathenism by the heathen wife or husband. Paul does not fear that, and he thinks, on the contrary, that the Christian, having divine help, would be the stronger, and would sanctify or save the pagan partner.

400. What Does Paul Mean by Saying (I Cor. 11:10) that a Woman Ought to Have Power on Her Head Because of the Angels?

By the abstract word, *exousia*—power—Paul plainly designates the hood covering her head. With this view the marginal reading accords: “A covering in sign that she is under the power of her husband.” It is even possible that the Greek word was the name of the hood, as the Latin word *imperium*, of the same meaning, was at one time the name for a woman’s headdress. As to “angels,” they are doubtless often present at the worship of the church below. See I Tim. 5:21: “I charge thee . . . before the elect angels”; and I Cor. 4:9, we are “a spectacle to angels and to men.” Bengel says that “as angels veil their faces before God, so would they require that the female face should veil before man.” It was in accordance with Jewish and Roman custom that women’s heads be covered in worship. The uncovered female head in Paul’s day expressed the moving of woman from her sphere and assimilated her to the disreputable class. Of course, at the present day, the apostle would not consider the hood as possessing any religious significance. Women now can sit or stand before men with heads uncovered, either in social circles or large assemblies, with no violation of womanly modesty.

401. What Is Meant by Being "Ready Always to Give an Answer to Every Man that Asketh You a Reason of the Hope that Is in You"?

This passage in I Pet. 3:15 is one of encouragement to the sincere but timid Christian. Fearing God, and having nothing else to fear, we should not be afraid to honor him whenever the occasion serves, by confessing him before men and by giving a testimony to the saving power of the Redeemer and the assurance of immortality. It means that we should run up the flag whenever occasion demands. This is a holy duty and one need not be afraid nor even agitated in revealing what is in the heart—in showing "the reason of the hope" that is in us in order that others may know that we are Christ's followers.

402. What Is the Beast that Was and Is Not, Yet Is?

This passage from Rev. 17:8 has been the subject of much discussion. The language of Revelation throughout is mystical and figurative. The time when the beast "is not" is the time when it has the "deadly wound"—a time when the seventh head became Christian externally, while the beastlike character was only temporarily suspended. Enough books to make a fair-sized library have been written on Revelation, many of them with special reference to the "beast," which typifies the Antichristian world power which, after a period of quiescence, returns worse than ever. Its semblance of Christianity is spurious and is quickly followed by open anti-Christianity. Some have held

that the mark of the beast was the brand of the ivy leaf with which Antiochus Epiphanes branded the Jews; others interpret it as the sign of popery and point out that the Greek letters of the word "*Lateinos*" contain the mystical number 666. Still others believe that the mark or sign was that of Balaam, the false prophet. Again, there are not a few who hold that the "ark" may not be a visible one, but something symbolical of allegiance.

403. What Is the Meaning of "Damnation," as Used in the Scriptures?

The word "damnation," as used in Scripture to denote the final loss of the soul, is not always, according to the newer versions, to be understood in precisely the same sense. Thus, in the old versions, the reading in Rom. 13:2, "They that resist shall receive to themselves damnation," is now held by the later translators to be more accurately expressed by the word "condemnation" (from the rulers, as the whole passage implies). Again, in I Cor. 11:29, the well-known passage is rendered by the new versions "eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself," etc. In John 5:29, "resurrection of damnation" is rendered "resurrection of judgment."

404. What Is Meant by Paul's Injunction to "Speak Evil of No Man"?

It is the duty of the Christian to repress in himself and to discourage in others the tendency to unduly criticise other people. Indeed, we are expressly commanded to "speak evil of no man" (Tit. 3:2; James

4:11). This of course applies equally to both sexes. The universal proneness to gossip, to "running down," or "knocking," is one of the evils of our time. It may arise from thoughtlessness, but it is prompted by a bad spirit. There are legitimate occasions when reproof may be necessary. The pastor who would hesitate to administer a judicious rebuke at a fitting opportunity would be neglecting his duty, and there are times when any good man or woman may have the duty to perform of speaking "a word in season," in reprobation of evil conduct. Even in such cases, we should act with moderation and judgment, aiming rather to convince than to irritate. But ill-natured, envious, disparaging talk, judging others unheard, shows an un-Christian spirit and is unworthy of one who professes to serve him who hates the sin, but loves the sinner. Wholly apart from its inconsistency with the Christian profession, there is something radically wrong with the mind and heart of the man or woman who persistently indulges in ill-bred, uncharitable and injurious remarks about other people.

405. What Is the Meaning of "Scarlet" and "Red Like Crimson" in the Well-known Passage in Isa. 1:18?

"Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," said the Lord through his prophet. Why these colors, and not for instance black? These terms are used because red is such a vivid color, making such deep stains. Smith's Bible dictionary states: "The only fundamental color of which the Hebrews appear to have had a clear conception was red." An-

other authority states: Certain scarlet cloth is first dyed in the grain and then dyed in the piece; it is thus double-dyed. In contrast with this our souls are to be washed *white*, like the "undyed wool," and even like the snow. The contrast is between a deep stain and purity.

406. What Is Meant by "And It Repenteth the Lord that He Had Made Man on the Earth and It Grieved Him at His Heart"?

Gen. 6:6 is a passage which has puzzled many Bible students. God cannot change (see Num. 23:19; I Sam. 15:29; Mal. 3:6; James 1:17); nor can he be affected by sorrow or other feelings common to humanity, but it was necessary on the part of the inspired writers to use terms comprehensible to the minds of men; hence he is described as "repenting" and "being grieved." Commentators here explain that the only adequate interpretation of the passage would be that the Creator was about "to show himself a God of judgment, by employing the power and agencies of the system in which they had been placed as the instruments of their punishment." They had "filled up the measure of their iniquities," and now the divine justice which his law had provided for such contingency was to go into operation. They had brought their punishment on their own heads by their persistent violation of the laws he had laid down for the government of the world—a judicial system which was self-operative and from which there could be no escape save through divine grace, granted in answer to sincere repentance. From the beginning, the wages of sin has

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been death. The passage in Acts 15:18, in stating God's foreknowledge, in no wise conflicts with this view. His fixed laws are beneficent to the obedient, but stern and inflexible to the unrepentant sinner.

407. What Is Meant by the Psalmist's Plea, "Bring My Soul Out of Prison"?

In Ps. 142:7 the phrase, "Bring my soul out of prison," is held by commentators to refer to the prison house of trouble and affliction (see Ps. 143:11). There are several passages in the Psalms in which the same figure of speech is employed.

408. What Is Meant by "Sin Lieth at Thy Door"?

Gen. 4:7 was a favorite text with Spurgeon, "Sin lieth at thy door." Cain's sin began as all other sins begin, with disobedience to God. Some people will tell you that "it does not matter how you worship God as long as you are sincere"; but there are right worship and wrong worship and only the right, given in the right spirit, is acceptable. Cain saw that Abel's perfect obedience was accepted, and he was angry and jealous. God is not unjust. Sin does not come upon a man unawares; there is a sentinel to warn of its approach. If it be indulged at the first advances and if the warnings be unheeded, serious danger follows. If, knowing the right, Cain sinned in the face of such knowledge, the sin would lie at his door, *i. e.*, he would be held accountable for it.

409. What Is Meant by the Passage that the Lord Sought to Kill Moses?

The passage in Ex. 4:24 is obscure. The Lord could kill Moses if he wished, but we infer that Moses was stricken down with sudden illness and was in danger of death. He and his wife appear to have thought that it was a judgment on them for deferring in the case of one of their sons the rite by which the boy was initiated into the Hebrew nation. Moses had, we imagine, postponed it at his wife's request. Her conduct seems to imply blame of him for yielding to her wish.

410. How Can We Reconcile the Statement that Asa Hated God with the Explicit Statement in Another Book that Asa's Heart Was Perfect with the Lord All His Days?

The latter statement in I Kings 15:14 is not explicit. You must remember that Asa had already been re-proved for taking matters in his own hand and showing distrust of God (see II Chron. 16:7-10), and had been very angry with the prophet who reprovved him, putting him in prison and punishing others who apparently were of the same mind as the prophet. He repeated his fault in his sickness, and perhaps if we knew the kind of physicians he consulted we should understand why God was so angry with him. As the prophet told him in the first instance, he, of all men, had reason to look to God in an emergency, as God had come to his rescue in a sore strait. The temper the king showed under reproof justifies the statement that he

hated God, though in his earlier years he had done some very good things. The writers of Chronicles and Kings were doubtless grateful to him for these things, and in courtly fashion praised him for the good he had done, and overlooked the evil.

411. What Does the Psalmist Mean by "Presumptuous Sins"?

Presumption, as used in Ps. 19:13, when having reference to conduct or moral action, implies arrogance or irreverence. When it relates to religion in general, it means a bold and daring confidence in God's goodness, without obedience to his opposition to the warnings of conscience, and with the delusive idea that they can be repented of afterward, when God will surely pardon them. Among presumptuous sins may be enumerated these: to profess religion without principle; to ask God's blessing and yet go on in sinful living; to search out and run into temptation; to be self-confident and complacent concerning one's spiritual condition, though no effort has been made to set the heart right with God, and to arraign the goodness and justice of the Almighty, instead of finding in our own sinful hearts the cause of our misfortunes. Persistent drunkenness, profanity, Sabbath-breaking and licentiousness are properly classed as presumptuous sins, when the sinner is one who knows the law and wilfully violates it, excusing his offense on the ground that God is too good and kind to punish such doings on the part of his mortal children.

412. Symbolical Expressions—What Are?

There are many expressions in Scripture that are figurative or symbolical, and which are not to be interpreted literally. Again, there are passages relating to the spiritual world which, in order to be comprehensible to our minds, must be expressed in human terms. The passage in Rev. 7:17 belongs to this class, and conveys to our minds in the only terms we can understand that there will be neither sorrow nor tears in heaven. See I Cor. 15:41-45, in which Paul tells of the natural and the spiritual body—the latter not conformed to the lower and animal life, but to the higher and spiritual life. Flesh and blood (verse 50) cannot inherit the kingdom. The passage in Revelation simply means that all the old earth sorrows and persecutions, the thirst, the heat, the hunger, cannot enter that heavenly realm.

413. If God Is Omniscient, Why Did He Say to Abraham, "For Now I Know that Thou Fearest God"?

This statement in Gen. 22:12 may be taken merely as the announcement that Abraham had stood God's test. The old problem of foreknowledge is an extremely difficult one, and discussion about it is usually fruitless. But we know that such an experience as this that Abraham had gone through is like the testing or proving of any instrument. It demonstrates what it is made of and how strongly and well it is made. God in this case speaks of the test as if it had been his own experiment. He proved Abraham and found him sound.

414. What Is Meant by the Reference in Revelation to Babylon, Seeing that the City of that Name Is Now Only a Heap of Ruins?

In Rev. 18 there is a detailed account of the fall and desolation of the mystic Babylon. Some writers on prophecy believe that when the ten kingdoms of the ancient Roman Empire become confederated in the last years of this dispensation, a federal city will be needed, and then Babylon will be rebuilt and will be destroyed as described in the chapter referred to. Other expositors, however, identify Babylon with papal Rome. The Romish ritual contains many striking resemblances to the heathen rites of ancient Babylon, which is a fact cited in confirmation of the theory. Similar denunciations to those in Rev. 18 will be found in Isa. 13, 21, and other places, where they apply to the literal Babylon of the Captivity.

415. What Is Meant by "Laying Aside Every Weight" (Heb. 12:1)?

The allusion is to the races and athletic contests of the Olympian games. He is trying to stimulate Christians to strive after the higher attainments of the Christian faith. Every believer has some special and peculiar hindrance to his progress. When he is saved by faith in Christ, he should endeavor to reach perfection. If his mind is set on wealth, or if there is some indulgence which he is fond of, which divides his attention and prevents him concentrating his energies on higher spiritual attainments, he should lay it aside. It may not be sinful, but if it is a hindrance, it

should be given up by one who is striving to rise. Though it be harmless, it may be a weight which must not be carried by one who is running the heavenly race.

416. What Is Meant by "The Just Living by Faith" (Rom. 1:17)?

The apostle is quoting Hab. 2:4, in which the prophet points out that even in the approaching calamities, the righteous people would be supported by their confidence in God. The apostle, quoting the passage in Romans, shows that faith is not a new principle of life, as it was prominent in the Old Testament. Beyond the fact of faith being the channel by which men enter into life, it persists all through the Christian's career. If the Christian lost his faith, his means of maintaining his spiritual life would be cut off. There are many Christians so worried and harassed that they would succumb if they were not sustained by their faith in him who is invisible.

417. What Does Paul Mean by Speaking (I Tim. 1:20) of Delivering Certain People to Satan?

It appears that the apostles possessed some mysterious power, unknown to us, of disciplining unworthy members of the church. There is a still more circumstantial reference to this power in I Cor. 5:5. It appears to have included, in addition to excommunication, some form of physical suffering which it was hoped would operate as a discipline to bring them to repentance. This suffering the apostle attributes to

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Satan, as he did his own affliction of the thorn in the flesh which he says (II Cor. 12:7) was a messenger from Satan to buffet him.

418. What Is Meant by "Is There No Balm in Gilead (Jer. 8:22).

The *balm* or *balsam* is a common name used for many oily and resinous substances flowing from certain trees or shrubs and used in medicine and surgery. Gilead (Num. 32:39) was famous for its balm, which was of the species called *opobalsamum*. This particular balm is mentioned by Pliny, Strabo, Tacitus and other famous historians, as being found in that part of Judea alone. Josephus says the trees or shrubs were originally brought by the Queen of Sheba to Solomon. It is believed, however, that the *balsam* or true balm of Gilead has long disappeared, although there are still trees belonging to the same class. The gum of the balm tree of Gilead was very precious, especially for healing wounds, hence the expression applied by Jeremiah (8:22): "Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there?"

419. What Is the Difference Between Calling a Man Blessed Who Has Committed No Wrong and One Who, Having Committed Many, Has Repented?

There is no conflict between the "blessed" of Ps: 1:1 and the "blessed" of Ps. 32:1. Blessed means happy, a mental state of contentment and joy, a condition of comfort and safety upon which a man is to be congratulated. Now both these classes of men are in this state—both the man who either as his life

habit or at any particular crisis or instance has done no wrong, or the man who has done wrong and is pardoned.

420. What Is the "Divine Right" of Kings?

Belief in the divine right of kings is largely the result of Old Testament interpretations, though it is also found among peoples who do not possess our Scriptures, as in Japan, where the orthodox Shintoists believe not only in the divine right of kings, but that the king is actually of divine ancestry. Indeed the close connection between spiritual and temporal power is found in many pagan tribes and from the earliest times. In some savage tribes the "medicine man" is supreme, holding religious and secular authority. In the time of Abraham we find Melchizedek both priest and king (Gen. 14:18). In Egypt the powers of the priesthood were vast, and the kings, being anointed by the priests, were thus supposed to receive their power from the gods. It was perhaps to get away from this very tangle of priest and king that Jehovah took his chosen people out of Egypt. They were to have no king but him, and when the people, influenced by the memories of Egypt and by the prosperity of the kingdoms about them, demanded that Samuel anoint a king for them, Jehovah expressed his great displeasure and warned them of the terrific evils which would follow the establishment of a throne (I Sam. 8:10-18). Notwithstanding all this, it was largely the influence of the Jewish Scriptures that perpetuated the theory of the divine right of kings in modern civilization. Since the Christian Church took over many of the ideas and forms of Judaism the

kings of Christian countries are still crowned by representatives of churchly authority, in some cases "holy" oil being used for the anointing. The New Testament writers advised Christians to recognize civil authority where matters of conscience were not involved, but were bold in defying that authority whenever it led contrary to what they believed to be the will of God. Indeed even the Old Testament writers were frank in depicting the crimes of the kings and were free to declare that evil kings were displeasing to God. So that the deeper message of the Bible, Old and New Testaments alike, is a refutation of this very theory it has been supposed to teach. What the Bible really teaches is the divine right of the people, the preciousness of every individual life in the sight of God, the principle that every soul is responsible directly to God for his acts, the principle that no man should be *master* of another, but that each shall be the comrade and helper of all. It is this revolutionary power of the Bible which gave the world the Magna Charta and the new hopes of real democracy. As for David, while he could not have attempted to justify his crime by his kingship, it is very likely that Bathsheba believed that in obeying the king she was really doing right. History is full of instances in which kings have presumed upon the old theory of the divine right of kings to do unjust and wicked things.

421. What Is the Difference Between "Kingdom of God" and "Kingdom of Heaven"?

The expressions "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" are used in different senses in the Scrip-

tures. At times the "kingdom of God" is meant to include the whole universe; again, the "kingdom of heaven" is applied to the celestial regions, where divine Majesty sits enthroned. In the Jewish church it was taught that there were various degrees or heights in the heavenly kingdom (see II Cor. 12:2). The old rabbinical doctrines made the distinction of three heavens, viz., the firmament, the starry heavens and the "heaven of heavens," which is the abode of the omnipresent God and of the highest of his spiritual creation, and it is this latter heaven which Christ called "the house of his Father" (John 14:2). Still further, the phrase "kingdom of heaven" is frequently used in the Gospels as meaning that wherever the rule of Christ is set up in the hearts of men, "the kingdom of heaven is within you." When we pray "Thy kingdom come," we look forward to the time when the ends of the earth will acknowledge God's supremacy and his rule will be universal.

422. What is the "Gift of Tongues"?

The gift of tongues at Pentecost was the miraculous method employed to bring strangers from distant lands into the Gospel fold. That the gift became later a cause of deep concern to the spiritual teachers of apostolic times is evident from such passages as I Cor. 12:10, which are not meant to depreciate the gift, but to warn believers not to be misled by unprofitable or doubtful manifestations of it. God is not the author of confusion. He never sends a message to his children that is totally unintelligible, and it may well be held that a message to which there is no key should be regarded as extremely doubtful.

423. What Is Conversion?

Conversion is the "turning" of the sinner to God, following the conviction of sin by the power of the Holy Spirit, bringing a change in the thoughts, desires, dispositions and life of the sinner as the result of the exercise of a saving faith in the atonement by which he is justified. In a more restricted sense, the word "conversion" is often used to mean "the voluntary act of the soul consciously accepting Christ in faith as Saviour." "Regeneration" is the creation of a new condition of the heart and is not a personal act of man, but that work of the Holy Spirit by which we experience a change of heart. It is being born anew "from above" (John 3:7), a "renewing of the mind" (Rom. 12:2), "a putting off of the old man and a putting on of the new" (Eph. 4:22, 24). The change in regeneration lies in the recovery of the moral image of God in the heart—"a condition which enables us to love him supremely and to find our highest joy in his service." It is right to believe that one who is willing to do God's will and to give up everything to him—one who holds himself and all he has at the Lord's disposal—is regenerated and ready to be used by the Lord in his work.

424. Why Was Nehemiah "Sad" Before the King?

The incidents in the first two chapters of Nehemiah are the record of a series of events which show how the narrator had found a way providentially opened to him to state the request he wished to make to the king. He was cup-bearer in the royal palace. The queen

referred to was probably Esther, whose presence would doubtless tend to encourage him in making his request, as it was known throughout the kingdom that she exercised great influence and was in strong sympathy with any movement for the benefit of the Jews. The monarch was Artaxerxes Longimanus, then in the twentieth year of his reign, or about B. C. 437. Josephus, the Jewish historian, relates how Nehemiah, while walking around the palace walls, overheard several persons talking in his native tongue, and, finding that they had lately come from Judea, he spoke to them and learned all about the unfinished and desolate condition of Jerusalem and the helpless state of the returned exiles. It was this knowledge that made him sad before the king.

425. When Were Churches First Used?

Temples and places of worship have been a feature of the world's civilization from the very earliest times. The erection of Christian churches may properly be said to date from about the time of Constantine the Great, when Christianity superseded paganism and became the controlling spirit in the architecture of the Christian world. The first assemblies of the primitive Christians, however, were not held in churches, but in the rooms of private houses, or in the open air. In Acts 1:13, 15 we have an account of the first church meeting indoors in an "upper room" in Jerusalem, where about 120 persons gathered for the first Christian service. Within the next half century, as the result of the apostles' missionary efforts, churches sprang up in many places, and some buildings began to be devoted almost exclusively to these services.

426. Who Were the Philistines?

The origin of the Philistines is not expressly stated in the Bible. However, Amos 9:7 speaks of them as "the Philistines from Caphtor," and "the remnant of the maritime district of Caphtor" (Jer. 47:4). It is believed by some authorities that they were the people who expelled the Avim and occupied their territory (Deu. 2:23) and that they were the descendants of Mizraim (Gen. 10:14). Some eminent scholars hold that they belong to the Semitic family, as the names of their cities and their proper names would indicate. The island of Crete is believed to have been the Caphtor of ancient times. The Philistines were a warlike race, superstitious and idolatrous. In the time of Saul they were evidently superior in the arts of life to the Israelites (see I Sam. 13:19-21).

427. What Is "The Great Tribulation"?

The "great tribulation" referred to in Dan. 12:1 ("there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation") is also implied in other prophecies, and in the utterances of the Saviour himself on various occasions. There is a remarkable concurrence in the view that the time of world salvation and regeneration is to be preceded by a period of phenomenal world trial and suffering. This is an essential part of the great drama—the Messianic hope, which, according to the Jewish prophets, is to find its climax in the complete restoration of the Palestinian kingdom to its ancient glory, while the Christian teaching is that it will culminate in world-wide Messianic dominion.

428. What Is Fellowship with God?

Fellowship with God is the essence of the Christian life. He is Light, and as in the natural world all material life and growth depend on light, so all spiritual life and growth must depend on God, "in whom is no darkness at all." "Walking in the light," therefore, is descriptive of the intimate fellowship and close dependence of the believer, who keeps in touch with God and with Christ, who is the "true light" (see I John 1:5-9). If we are in the light, we will be divinely helped and guided in our inward and outward actions, and in all things to which we apply ourselves. Indeed, this is the test of our fellowship. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." Such companionship brings not only spiritual development but enlarges our Christian fellowship one with another and gives a new joy and fulness to life. It is not an imitation merely, but a union and oneness in all things with him with whom we walk.

429. Is the Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus a Parable?

1. Although the story of the rich man and Lazarus is the only one of its kind in the New Testament in which a proper name is employed, it is universally regarded as a parable. Lazarus was a familiar name in the country where Jesus spent the years of his ministry. It is true, there are traditions still preserved which give the name of the rich man as Dobruk, and that of the beggar as Nimeusis, but these are unauthentic. Jesus used the

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two characters to illustrate two different types of men, the helpless and friendless poor and the heartless, selfish rich.

430. Sabbath Day's Journey—What Was?

A "Sabbath day's journey," the distance which according to Jewish ecclesiastical law might be traveled without violating the sanctity of the day, was approximately 2,000 yards, or 12,000 handbreadths. The distance was not to be measured from any point according to whim, but in obedience to definite and minute rules. It is assumed that the distance was originally fixed in relation to the distance between the ark and the tents of the people in the wilderness (Josh. 3:3, 4). To assemble near the ark was a duty on the Sabbath, therefore walking that distance was no violation of the day and it was taken as the measurement of a lawful Sabbath day's journey. The spirit and purpose of the prohibition were to forbid traveling on ordinary business on that day, and to afford rest for beasts of burden, as well as men. The Mount of Olives is stated in Acts 1:12 to be a Sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem.

431. What Is the Meaning of "The Heart of David Was Perfect"?

To understand the Bible use of words in I Kings 11:4 we must remember that God's thoughts are not man's thoughts (Isa. 55:8), neither does God see as man sees. He looks not upon the outward appearance, but upon the heart (I Sam. 16:7). God's dealings with nations or individuals has but one standard for

character—righteousness of intention and desire of “the heart”; to do his will only.

We find other Bible characters described as “Perfect with (notice the word ‘with’) the Lord”; “Upright”; “Eschewing evil”; “Righteous”; “Walking with the Lord”; yet all guilty of sinning in times of weakness and temptation; some falling into degrading transgressions.

It may be asked: “How can this be explained?”

When the Scriptures testify they were “perfect with God” it does not assert they were sinless, in the absolute meaning of sinless perfection. When we are told “the heart of David . . . was . . . perfect with the Lord his God,” it is not saying that in his efforts to serve him he was an expression of all God required him to do and be.

“Perfect” has various shades of meaning. In Bible usage it may imply full development, or growth into maturity of godliness and perfect holiness. It denotes perfection of action toward a finish. A child may be perfect as a child but short of all perfection of manhood. Control of spiritual and mental and physical powers must be acquired through growth in experiences. God knowing man’s frame to be but sin-born clay, remembers it (Ps. 103:14). Therefore, he must rescue his creatures through spirit and heart affections by a love and faith developed unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Perfection of God’s children consists of a ceaseless growth into a knowledge of God and Christ.

THE HEREAFTER

432. Will the Future State Be One of Material or Spiritual Glory?

The future state will be one in which our personal identity will be preserved. We will have what may be called resurrection bodies, not greatly unlike that of our Saviour after his resurrection. The book of Revelation being prophetic and highly figurative, is to be interpreted accordingly. As the resurrection body will be spiritual, so will the abode of these bodies be spiritual—a state of indefinite development of our highest powers, chiefly the moral, intellectual and spiritual. It will not be a disembodied state. The qualities seen in the spiritual bodies of those who have reappeared on earth (such as Moses, Elijah and Jesus himself) are, very likely, but properties superior to those we now possess. Read and compare Job 19: 25-27; Ps. 17: 15; I Cor. 13: 12; I Cor. 15: 44, and entire chapter, and I Thess. 4: 17, etc. Many believe that the earth will be refitted, for the abode of the righteous in this exalted state. To others, it appears that then all the universe will form the theater of that existence, as we shall have powers of locomotion commensurate with all our other conditions.

433. Is Sanctification Complete at Death, or Does It Continue in Heaven?

We cannot dogmatize about the state of the believer in heaven. So little is revealed to us about that state,

that absolute knowledge is impossible. Judging by what we do know, we infer that there must be a vast increase in knowledge of God and divine things which must have its effect on the character. Then, too, to be in the presence of God, and associated with pure and holy beings and liberated from the gross influence of the flesh would, we should imagine, tend to elevate and ennoble and develop the spiritual nature. Perhaps it would be more accurate to describe the progress we expect as growth and development rather than sanctification.

434. Did the Jews Believe in the Immortality of the Soul?

While the belief is nowhere directly stated in the early Jewish writings there are many passages which appear to indicate that it was general. The laws in the Pentateuch against holding communication with the dead imply a prevalent belief that the soul lived on after the death of the body. Saul's application to the witch of Endor (I Sam. 28) shows that he believed in the continued existence of the soul. In Heb. 11: 16 the statement is made that the patriarchs expected to enter a heavenly country. Christ also referred to the belief as existing in the days of Moses (see Luke 20: 37).

435. What Becomes of Those Who Die in Ignorance of the True God and His Word?

God has his witnesses in every land and every nation. There is no race, as far as known, which has not a definite idea of a Supreme Being and of right and

wrong. The Jews held that the heathen were lost, but Christianity has always held that they will be judged under God's natural law and may be accepted as being a law unto themselves (see Rom. 2:14, 26, 27). No one can set limit to the divine grace and forgiveness, and no church or creed can dogmatize concerning those who, not having the Gospel, have yet lived according to their lights. If Christ's atonement was made for all mankind, it is logical to believe that it includes the virtuous and upright in pre-Gospel days as well as those who come afterward.

436. Will Every One Be Saved?

The statement (I Tim. 2:6) that Christ gave himself a ransom for all, and other statements of like import might be taken to imply that all will eventually be saved in the next world if not in this, but it would be very rash to depend on such an interpretation. It would be an awful thing for a person who did so to find that it was wrong. If a king were to offer amnesty to all rebels who laid down their arms within a given time, the offer would be made to all, but only those who complied with the conditions would be benefited. Salvation is offered to all who accept Christ and there is no limit. If the whole world would accept him, his sacrifice would avail for all. Thus it is universal. But what is to be said of those who neglect it or reject it? There is no further sacrifice. It is not for us to limit God's mercy, but he gives us in his Word no ground for hope that another opportunity of accepting Christ will be afforded after death.

437. Is the Desire for Immortality a Universal One, or Must We Regard It as One that Appeals Only to the Enlightened or Spiritualized Heart?

The belief in immortality and the desire of it are world-wide. Yet when we look around us and see the vast majority of the human race with their affections strongly concentrated on material things, we may well doubt whether the problem of a future life is receiving the supreme attention it merits. There are three classes, *i. e.*: 1. Those who really desire immortality and who try, with divine help, to mold their lives accordingly; 2, those who shrink back from the great question, and, 3, those who apparently never think of it. This last is a very large class. What they hear on the subject seems to make no impression. Christ came to bring life and immortality to light, but there is no outward evidence that these darkened minds have ever heard and understood the message. The pursuit of riches, of pleasure, of luxury, of sinful indulgence, and of the prizes the world offers is fatal to spiritual development. Yet even such persons, once thoroughly awakened, often become the most zealous of Christians and the world's allurements seem to them a very little thing in comparison with the life to come.

438. Will a Christian Who Has Studied and Cultivated His Mind Here upon Earth Be Any Further Advanced in Heaven than If He Had Not?

All that has been revealed to us concerning the other life justifies the conviction that it is a state of vastly

enlarged activities and uninterrupted progress. There the spiritual life, which has been kindled in the soul while here, will find amplest room for expansion, and all those noble qualities of heart and mind that go to the formation of the best type of character here below, and which are elementary forms of the perfect manhood, will doubtless survive after our spiritual enlargement, since they have a close affinity to the spiritual life. To efface all intellectual culture in the next life is as great an improbability as would be the effacement of individuality. Consequently, one who while on earth has cultivated the nobler faculties will probably begin the heavenly life with that advantage.

439. Who and What Are the Angels?

Although much has been written concerning the nature of angels, very little is really known, beyond the fact that they are God's messengers, endowed with spiritual bodies (see I Cor. 15:44), and employed as the ministers of the divine will. The Bible sheds little light on the nature of angels, although it mentions them many times. One commentator writes: "They are represented as being in the widest sense agents of God's providence, natural and supernatural, to the body and to the soul; thus the operations of nature are spoken of as under angelic guidance fulfilling the will of God." The ministry of angels is mentioned in various passages, including Matt. 13:41-49; 24:31; Luke 16:22, etc. Jewish rabbinical literature has preserved the tradition of the rebellion and fall of the apostate angels, and the reference in Isa. 14:12 has sometimes been interpreted as related to this tradition. In Jude 6 there is a well-known passage on the same

subject. Milton in *Paradise Lost* described the fall of Lucifer in a famous poetic passage (see also Luke 10: 18). The angels are ministering spirits who while themselves obeying the will of God, communicate God's and Christ's will and execute their purposes and judgments (Neh. 9:6; I Kings 19:5; Ps. 68:17; Dan. 8: 16; Matt. 2: 13, 19; Luke 1: 19, 28; Ps. 103:20; Num. 22:22; Ps. 103:21; II Sam. 24:16. Their duties are to minister to Christ, extend his purposes and to watch over us, especially over the children and helpless (Matt. 4: 11; Matt. 13:41; Matt. 18:10; Ps. 34:7; Ps. 91: 11).

440. What Will Be the Reward of Saints?

The reward of saints prepared by God and Christ for the servants of Christ is of God's good pleasure, not given us on merit but by grace (Rom. 2:7; Rom. 4:4, 5; Matt. 20:14; Heb. 11:16; John 14:2; Col. 3:24). It is described as "being with Christ, beholding the glory of him and of God and of being glorified with Christ" (John 12:26; Ps. 17:15; Matt. 5:8; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17, 18; Col. 3:4). In this state we shall sit in judgment and reign with Christ for ever and ever (Dan. 7:22; Matt. 19:28; II Tim. 2:12; Rev. 22:5). This reward is an incorruptible crown of righteousness, glory and life and joint heirship with Christ and all saints of an immovable kingdom and all things (I Cor. 9:25; II Tim. 4:8; I Pet. 5:4; James 1:12; Rom. 8: 17; Rev. 21:7; Acts 20:32; Heb. 9:15; I Pet. 1:4; Matt. 25:34; Heb. 12:28). In this glorious state we shall shine as the stars with everlasting light and live in a home eternal in the heavens and in a city which has foundation and enter into rest and fulness of joy (Dan.

12:3; Isa. 60:19; Luke 18:30; Heb. 10:34; II Cor. 5:1; Heb. 11:10; Matt. 25:21; Heb. 4:9; Ps. 16:11). Such reward is great, full, sure, satisfying and inestimable and saints may feel confident of attaining it but should be careful not to lose it (Matt. 5:12; II John 8; Prov. 11:18; Ps. 17:15; Isa. 64:4; Ps. 73:24; II John 8). And therefore the prospect thereof should lead to diligence, pressing forward, enduring suffering for Christ and faithfulness unto death (II John 8; Phil. 3:14; II Cor. 4:16-18; Rev. 2:10).

441. Is There Scriptural Authority for the Claim that Christ Will Rule on Earth?

The passage in Rev. 11:15 has its parallel in Dan. 2:44. It is the visible setting up of heaven's sovereignty over the earth—that sovereignty which was rejected before by the world's rulers. This done, the distinction of the worldly and the spiritual shall cease. The whole earth, with all of its affairs, will at once be worldly and Christian, but worldly in the transformed sense, all being ordered in accordance with the divine will and in perfect recognition of and obedience to God's laws. But it should not be forgotten that the kingdom has its first beginnings in the hearts of God's true children here and now. This is repeatedly emphasized by Jesus in his talks with his disciples. These beginnings, though only a faint foreshadowing of the ultimate development of the kingdom, are nevertheless real and their earnest cultivation is a duty laid upon all believers. Christ ushered in the kingdom; his followers, like a little faithful flock, maintain it perseveringly and we look forward to the day, in the fulness of time,

when it shall be proclaimed in divine majesty and power over the whole earth.

442. Does Memory of the Earthly State Continue after Death?

In the parable of Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16: 27, 28) it is clearly shown that memory of the earthly state continues after death. This is so because the soul being freed from earthly obstacles sees clearly through space. Death is only a veil and transparent to those on the other side are the things here. In two distinct passages (I Cor. 13: 12 and II Cor. 3: 18) Paul employs a figure of speech to convey the idea that our mortality is an obstacle to spiritual vision—a veil. Death is the shedding of the garment of mortal flesh. As the believer nears the close of life, his hold on material things becomes feebler and his spiritual perception grows clearer. The soul is preparing to loosen its material environment; it is ripening for release—the putting off of the tabernacle of this flesh (II Pet. 1: 13, 14; II Cor. 5: 1). As the end of the journey comes into view, the spiritual vision is enabled to perceive and understand many things it could not do before. With regard to the knowledge of those on the “other side” of what is going on here, we have Scriptural evidence in support of it. Heb. 12: 1 tells us that we are encompassed with “a cloud of witnesses.” All heaven is looking on and watching our struggles here, although our own eyes are still holden. There are other texts in Scripture which go to show that those who have passed “beyond the veil” are not indifferent to us who are left behind (see Luke 16: 19-25).

443. Will the Final Judgment Be of Two Kinds?

All that we read about the final judgment indicates that it will be of two kinds. There will be the great separation of the sheep from the goats (Matt. 25:32) and there will also be another and more joyful judgment, in which rewards are distributed among the children of God in proportion to the work each has done for Christ (Luke 19:22-26). These rewards will not be given according to the prominence Christians have attained in the world, nor according to the quantity or conspicuity of the work done; but on Christ's principles of fidelity to him and his spirit. The apostle teaches that many a servant of Christ will miss a reward, because his work has not been done in the right spirit and motive. He will be saved if he is in Christ, but his work will not be accepted (see I Cor. 3:13, 14). To cite examples: Can you conceive of a Christian man doing good works from an impure motive? Suppose a clergyman has lost the high ideal he had when he entered the ministry, and now his aim in preaching is to increase his popularity, or to get more money. Suppose a man gives a public library to the city, or pensions a widow, and his real motive, if he would honestly analyze it, is to get a reputation for charity and beneficence, or to promote his election to Congress. The clergyman's preaching may be earnest and effective and the other man's gifts may be well applied, but God, who reads the heart, knows that he has had his reward in getting the applause, or the money, or the position which was sought. Having had it he deserves no other, and he gets none. He suffers the

loss of the reward God would have given him for work done for his sake.

444. There Being No Marriage in Heaven, Will Husband and Wife Recognize Each Other in Heaven?

Recognition does not imply a resumption of the old relations. Christ's words were a reply to a question which assumed that there might be a dispute between husbands of the same woman as to the right of one of them to treat her as his wife. He reminded them that in heaven people would not have their fleshly bodies. After the resurrection they will have spiritual bodies (see I Cor. 15:44). The husband may and doubtless will recognize his wife and the wife the husband, and it will be a loving recognition; but they will be so absorbed in the spiritual delights of the new condition that the old relations will be gross and coarse in their eyes.

445. Will There Be a Resurrection of the Wicked?

In the earlier stages the resurrection doctrine was evidently taught as a hope which applied to righteous Israelites, and it was afterward extended by degrees to others, including the Gentiles. In Luke 14: 14 a distinction seems to be made between the resurrection of the righteous and that of the wicked, and in Luke 20: 35, 36, those who are accounted worthy to attain the resurrection from the dead are spoken of as "the sons of God"—the inference drawn by some commentators on this point being that the resurrection of

the righteous is to be separate from that of the wicked (see John 5:29 and Acts 24:15; also I Thess. 4:16; I Cor. 15:23, 24). Compare also John 6:40, in which the resurrection of the righteous is represented as an act of grace, as also in John 5:21; and in John 6:44, 54 Jesus says: "And I will raise him up at the last day." Paul also, in Rom. 8:11, teaches a resurrection of the righteous. With regard to the second resurrection, whether it will be simultaneous with the first, or after an interval, commentators differ. Rev. 20:4-6 has been held to imply an interval of a thousand years, but this is merely conjecture. There has been a great deal of discussion concerning the two resurrections, and many books have been written on the subject.

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